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**The *Fin-de-Siècle* Scots Renaissance:  
The Roles of Decadence in the Development of  
Scottish Cultural Nationalism, c.1880-1914**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## Abstract

This thesis offers a cultural history of the 'Scots Renaissance', a revival of Scottish identity and culture between 1880 and 1914, and demonstrates how heavily Scottish cultural nationalism in this period drew from, and was defined by, *fin-de-siècle* Decadence. Few cultural historians have taken the notion of a Scots Renaissance seriously and many literary critics have styled the period as low point in the health of Scottish culture – a narrative which is deeply flawed. Others have portrayed Decadence as antithetical to nationalism (and to Scotland itself). The thesis challenges these characterisations and argues that there was a revival of Scottish identity in the period which drew from, and contributed to, Decadent critiques of 'civilisation' and 'progress'.

The thesis considers literature alongside visual art, which were so interdependent around the 1890s. It focuses on three main cultural groups in Scotland (the circle that surrounded Patrick Geddes, the Glasgow School and writers of the Scottish Romance Revival) but it speaks to an even wider cultural trend. Together, the various figures treated here formed a loose movement concerned with reviving Scottish identity by returning to the past and challenging notions of improvement, utilitarianism and stadialism.

The first chapter considers the cultural and historical background to the Scots Renaissance and reveals how the writings of the Scottish Romance Revival critiqued stadialist narratives in order to lay the ground for a more unified national self. The second chapter demonstrates how important *japonisme* and the Belgian cultural revival were to the Scots Renaissance: Scottish cultural nationalists looked to Japan and Belgium, amongst other nations, to gain inspiration and form a particular counter-hegemony. The final three chapters of the thesis explore how a unifying myth of origin was developed through neo-Paganism, how connections to an ancestral self were activated through occultism, and how such ideas of mythic origin and continuation were disseminated to wide audiences through pageantry. In doing so, the thesis charts the origins, development and dissemination of the Scots Renaissance, while situating it within its historical and international contexts.

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## **Introduction: The Seed of the New**

## i. Introduction

Mr Carnegie has bought Skibo Castle.  
His Union Jack's sewn to the stars and stripes.  
James Murray combs the dialect from his beard  
And files slips for his massive *Dictionary*.  
Closing a fine biography of mother,  
Remembering Dumfries, and liking boys,  
James Barrie, caught in pregnant London silence,  
Begins to conceive the Never Never Land.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Crawford's 'Scotland in the 1890s' (1990), the final stanza of which is quoted above, offers a revealing insight into the cultural (and critical) reception of *fin-de-siècle* Scotland. The poem represents several of the main writers and thinkers in the period, including: James Frazer, Andrew Lang, Robert Louis Stevenson and J. M. Barrie. What unites all of these figures in the poem is that they are portrayed as elsewhere, removed from the land of the title, 'thinking of' or 'remembering' Scotland. Of all the figures mentioned, only one appears in the land the title announces, Andrew Carnegie, but even the image of him at Skibo Castle is associated with Britain through the union flag reference. Crawford's is a poem which purposefully subverts its own title: he does not detail Scotland in the 1890s because anything of note associated with Scotland then was elsewhere and Scottish identity was strongly incorporated into British identity – Scotland could only be remembered. The nation is portrayed as a negated land, the 'Never Land' that concludes the poem.

Crawford's representation is not isolated. For several critics, Scotland between 1880 and 1920 was 'effectively dead',<sup>2</sup> with little literature 'worth attention' and there was a 'feebleness' in Scotland that meant it was unable 'to generate a nationalism'.<sup>3</sup> These various characterisations of Scotland as debilitated and incorporated are strikingly at odds with some contemporary commentaries on *fin-de-siècle* Scotland. For instance, Holbrook Jackson noted in 1913 that there was a 'Scottish movement' in the period: a movement that was analogous to the Irish national movements and

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Crawford, 'Scotland in the 1890s', in *Scottish Literature in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed. by David McCordick (Dalkeith: Scottish Cultural Press, 2002), pp. 1177-1178 (ll. 15-22).

<sup>2</sup> Cairns Craig, 'The Case for Culture', *The Scottish Review of Books*, 10.3 (2014), 19-20 (p. 19).

<sup>3</sup> Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 95, 113, 123.

Celtic Revival which 'clustered about Professor Patrick Geddes in Edinburgh'.<sup>4</sup> He writes that the 'chief activity' of the movement was the production of *The Evergreen* magazine, between 1895 and 1896,<sup>5</sup> a magazine that had strong ties to the Celtic Revival and similarities to *The Yellow Book*. Indeed, in that magazine, Geddes wrote of a developing 'Scots Renaissance' – a revival of Scottish national culture and identity.

This thesis demonstrates that the established narrative of Scottish culture as 'effectively dead' around the *fin de siècle* is deeply problematic. It argues that there was a Scots Renaissance, one that was not limited to Geddes or his circle but manifested widely; indeed, several of the figures included in Crawford's poem perform its features. This Scots Renaissance, I argue, can be unlocked through a consideration of *fin-de-siècle* Decadence in Scotland, a phenomenon which has also been largely ignored, despite the fact that Geddes believed it could offer 'the seed of the new',<sup>6</sup> a stimulus for Renaissance. Varieties of Decadence that critiqued narratives of improvement supported and defined *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism.

'The Seed of the New' will lay the necessary foundations for approaching this field of inquiry. It begins by outlining the research questions that are covered in the thesis and examines the gains and shortcomings of previous scholarship when handling these, or similar, questions. It clarifies what Decadence and cultural nationalism will be taken to mean throughout the thesis and, through a consideration of John Hutchinson's ideas of cultural nationalism and various critics' discussions of Decadence, I will indicate why the two concepts need to be considered alongside each other. This introduction also outlines why, when thinking about the Scots Renaissance, we need to expand beyond the Outlook Tower community in Edinburgh and consider it as a national movement, paying particular attention to the Outlook Tower circle's connections to the Glasgow School. These two *fin-de-siècle* communities – consisting of writers, architects, sociologists and visual artists – developed innovative civic activist projects, publications and designs that had many ties to each other and to

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<sup>4</sup> Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), pp. 40-41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> Papers and correspondence relating to *The Evergreen* and Messrs. Patrick Geddes and Colleagues [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/2].

varieties of Decadence. I also detail why an interdisciplinary methodology is essential for engaging with this topic and period.

## **ii. Research Questions**

To examine the *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalist movement and its links to Decadence, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. To what extent were these writers and artists of the movement products of their political and historical contexts: what distinguishes Scottish developments from those in Ireland and elsewhere? What is the relationship of this movement to the Scottish Enlightenment and stadial/teleological historiography?
2. Can Decadent tropes and styles support nationalism? How did Scottish cultural nationalists use the styles and ideas that developed in this period to perform subversions of progressive narratives and support the national movement?
3. To what extent is collaboration between individuals across Scotland evident: how were styles, ideas and efforts shared?
4. Did the Scottish movement fuel modernity and how did it impact on twentieth-century developments?

These questions will be examined throughout the thesis. To demonstrate why these questions need to be asked, I will review previous literature that has touched on these questions, illustrate that they have not been adequately addressed and consider why they have been mishandled or neglected.

The first part of the first research question has very rarely been treated by scholars, despite the important interactions between particular political and socio-cultural developments in Scotland and the literature and art of the period. There are two reasons why this relationship has largely been neglected: there is both a tendency in scholarship to underplay the importance (or existence) of the resurging confidence in nationality in *fin-de-siècle* Scotland or the accompanying Scottish Home Rule movement (both discussed in Chapter 1), complemented by a tendency to promote the importance of so-called 'kailyard' literature. Despite Sir Reginald Coupland's substantial summary of the Scottish Home Rule movement in *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism* (1954), very little work has been done on the Scottish Home Rule

movement, especially in comparison to the scholarship on the complementary Irish movement. The movement is not neglected in histories of Scottish nationalism and is given space in H. J. Hanham's *Scottish Nationalism* (1969), James Mitchell's *Strategies for Self-Government: The Campaigns for a Scottish Parliament* (1996) and Colin Kidd's *Unionism and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (2008) but there have been no substantial, focussed considerations of this socio-political development that recognise its significance. Consequently, few scholars have considered *fin-de-siècle* Scottish literature and culture in light of these developments, which is problematic given how many writers and artists had an explicit interest in re-energising Scottish nationhood and identity, including Stevenson, Geddes and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Although some scholars have noted such interests in passing, any claims made have not been thorough or analytical – Thomas Howarth, for instance, correctly notes that Mackintosh's work reflects the 'resurgence of national spirit in Scotland' but does not clarify the type of resurgence or the form of the 'national spirit'.<sup>7</sup> Scottish cultural nationalism in this period has attracted little sustained analysis.

Recently, critics have placed some of these figures in the context of the revival of interest in Scottish cultural and political nationalism. These works include Murray Pittock and Isla Jack's 'Patrick Geddes and the Celtic Revival' (2007), John Morrison's monograph *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting* (2003) and his chapter 'Nationalism and Nationhood: Late-Nineteenth-Century Painting in Scotland' (2003). Morrison's writings apply Graeme Morton's notion of nineteenth-century Scottish 'unionist nationalism' – a nationalism that also celebrated the Union, which Morton outlines in his monograph of that name (1999) – to the culture of the period. Morrison's work successfully brings Scottish artwork into a pertinent context but his notion that the nationalist art of the period is underpinned by 'unquestioned,

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and The Modern Movement* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), p. 230.

unconditional unionism' needs to be corrected.<sup>8</sup> As I will show Scottish political culture and a number of literary and visual artists were beginning to (albeit tentatively) critique and resist centralisation and some of the narratives that underpinned unionism. Several, including Geddes, were also more interested in internationalism more widely, not simply unionism, as Murdo Macdonald's 'Celticism and Internationalism in the circle of Patrick Geddes' (2005) demonstrates. With a more substantial history of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish nationalism, one that analyses it in relation to Ireland – adopting a similar methodology to that used in James Hunter's 'The Gaelic Connection: The Highlands, Ireland and Nationalism, 1873-1922' (1975) and Elizabeth Cumming and Nicola Gordon Bowe's *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Edinburgh and Dublin, 1885-1925* (1998) – narratives of Scottish cultural nationalism could certainly be improved.

The second reason cultural nationalism has largely been overlooked is that, instead of examining the 'effective' national movement that Jackson summarises,<sup>9</sup> literary scholars have focussed in far greater detail on the other movement in the period which Jackson outlines, the 'Kailyard' school. This school, which is usually taken to encompass the likes of J. M. Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888) and Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* (1894), is often framed as a literature that focussed on life in the rural Scottish parish and 'simply accepted Scotland's provincial status',<sup>10</sup> as Crawford has recently articulated – a low point in the national literary narrative. From the 1950s onwards, attempts were made to assert the centrality of Kailyard literature to 1890s Scottish culture, which styled that decade as parochial. George Blake's *Barrie and the Kailyard School* (1951) argued that this literature unacceptably turned away from city life and industrialism and reflected both the 'escapism of a defeated and absorbed people' and made Scottish literature 'fated for a long time to be domestic, limited, parochial'.<sup>11</sup> Ian Campbell's *Kailyard* (1981) is more

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<sup>8</sup> John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 227.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Crawford, *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and Literary Imagination, 1314-2014* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 135.

<sup>11</sup> George Blake, *Barrie and the Kailyard School* (London: Arthur Barker, 1951), pp. 12, 75.

nuanced and treats 'kailyard' not as a fixed school but as 'a set of attitudes in theory and practice evolving from certain features in Scottish fiction'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, he imagines the Kailyard in opposition to early nineteenth-century 'national activity' and believes that the 'advancing century' brought with it 'diluted national consciousness', which the Kailyard school epitomised.<sup>13</sup> The Kailyard became a means of generalising about *fin-de-siècle* Scottish literature and culture and styling it as parochial. This is most clearly reflected in Gillian Shepherd's 'The Kailyard' chapter for *The History of Scottish Literature* (1988). Here, Shepherd refers to the 1890s as the 'kailyard decade'<sup>14</sup> and associates it with local separateness and a tendency to 'thwart a national consciousness that might have been': 'national infanticide'.<sup>15</sup>

To counter these debilitating notions, Andrew Nash's *Kailyard and Scottish Literature* (2007) offered a more rigorous understanding of the term and 'Kailyard' literature. One of the most important contributions he made was to show how this literature could fit into a context of national revival. 'Kailyard' literature could attempt to correct English characterisations of Scottish identity,<sup>16</sup> while its emphasis on rural Scotland could be seen to work in the tradition that finds Scotland's national voice best preserved there.<sup>17</sup> However, despite Nash's intervention, characterisations of late nineteenth-century Scotland can still be rooted in typical Kailyard discourse, such as in Margery Palmer McCulloch's relatively recent description of the 'kailyard parochialism of the late nineteenth century'.<sup>18</sup> The Kailyard has strangely come to dominate literary critics' understanding of not only late nineteenth-century Scottish literature but the culture more widely and has created a scenario where the various figures beyond the 'Kailyard' – and some associated with it, namely Barrie – have been unfairly neglected or mishandled. It has also led the discipline to underplay or ignore the significance of national revival in the period, intruding on a national literary

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<sup>12</sup> Ian Campbell, *Kailyard* (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1981), p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> Gillian Shepherd, 'The Kailyard', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, ed. by Cairns Craig, 4 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), III, pp. 309-320 (p. 310).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Nash, *Kailyard and Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918-1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 206.

or cultural narrative. As a corrective, I reorient focus away from the idea of 'Kailyard' to the likes of Geddes, Stevenson, William Sharp, Arthur Conan Doyle, R. B. Cunninghame Graham and the Glasgow School to recover the often unappreciated cultural (and, at times, political) nationalism of the period.

The second part of the first question (on the relationship between Scottish national identity and stadial historiography) has been addressed by numerous scholars, but in the context of a different time period. The importance of Enlightenment stadialism and narratives of teleological history in defining (and compromising) Scottish national identity has become a core debate in the fields of Scottish Romanticism and the long eighteenth century. Scholars have demonstrated that stadial narratives of progress and improvement often resulted in Scottish and Celtic culture being understood as 'backward', a previous 'stage' that had to give way to a Unionist identity, and that several 'Romantics' resisted such marginalisation. This is most convincingly illustrated in Cairns Craig's *Out of History* (1996) and Murray Pittock's *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (2008). Pittock has demonstrated how stadialist narratives supported Scottish cultural infantilisation: 'it could be a childhood tale, a story, a romance, but not modernity nor reality', while Craig notes that this teleological narrative often led Scottish writers to resistance, namely by presenting history as 'erupt[ing] back into the present and disrupt[ing] the progressive narrative of the historical'.<sup>19</sup> Although these considerations have radically changed the way the long eighteenth century is understood, academics have neglected to consider how this dynamic operated through the nineteenth century. Late nineteenth-century writers (often framed as the late-Romantics) were equally concerned with the hegemonic narratives of progress and improvement in industrial, imperial Victorian society. This thesis will bring the pivotal context of stadial historiography to bear on *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural identity for the first time. Only through acknowledging this context can we achieve a thorough understanding of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalists,

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<sup>19</sup> Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 65; Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narratives Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p. 71.



almost all of whom resisted or complicated narratives of progress and stadial history to reclaim Scottish culture, and their interaction with Decadence, which emerged as these very narratives lost their credibility.

Given the styling of Scottish culture in the period as parochial, at least by literary critics, and the lack of consideration of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalists' resistance to stadialist ideas of 'progress', it is unsurprising that 1890s Scotland has been dislocated from many wider *fin-de-siècle* ideas, styles and movements, particularly Decadence.<sup>20</sup> This thesis seeks to counter such neglect by addressing the question of whether there was a particular reception and performance of Decadence in Scotland and if this supported *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism, the second research question.

Several critics have mooted the idea that Decadence did exist in Scotland, particularly scholars prior to the 1970s. In 1952, Thomas Howarth stated that 'the Glasgow style merges perfectly into the background of the decadent nineties; it belongs unmistakably to the Beardsley period, to the world of Wilde and Swinburne, of Rossetti and Burne-Jones, and *Evergreen*; it owes something to Japan and much to the Celtic tradition'.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Philippe Jullian, in *Dreamers of Decadence* (1969), notes that some of the best representations of Decadent fairies were produced by Jessie M. King, Annie French and Margaret Macdonald.<sup>22</sup> Although unappreciative, Sorley Maclean also found Decadent components in the culture of the period, describing it as 'decadent romanticist twaddle' in 1940.<sup>23</sup> Despite these acknowledgments, hesitancy over using the word 'Decadence' in the Scottish context has developed since then and it has been almost entirely neglected in favour of the terms 'art nouveau', 'arts and crafts' and 'Celtic Revival', with the exception of a few

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<sup>20</sup> The form of Decadence discussed here had close ties to *fin-de-siècle* Symbolism. I chose to primarily engage with the concept of Decadence in this thesis as the Decadent willed degeneration into past stages had particularly strong ties to Scottish cultural nationalism in this period. However, the Symbolist concern with transcendence – see John Reed, *Decadent Style* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 14 – had affinities with Decadence as it often involved reverting to previous 'stages' when spirituality was more deeply integrated with cultural practice. Thus, while rooted in examining *fin-de-siècle* Decadence, the thesis also addresses Symbolism.

<sup>21</sup> Howarth, p. 232.

<sup>22</sup> Philippe Jullian, *Dreamers of Decadence: Symbolist painters of the 1890s* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> Somhairle MacGill-Eain, 'Five Gaelic poems – regional, national or European?', *Aiste*, 2 (2008), 1-29 (18).

voices very recently. There are two reasons for this: Decadence has been read as antithetical to nationalism in general, while Decadence has also bizarrely come to be understood as antithetical to late nineteenth-century Scotland, mainly owing to some of the stereotyped characterisations of the nation discussed above. These positions need to be questioned to open up space for a discussion on Decadence and Scottish cultural nationalism.

Oversimplified understandings of Decadence have led commentators to often portray it as antithetical to nationalism. This position is most clearly evidenced in Matthew Potolsky's recent monograph *The Decadent Republic of Letters* (2013) which asserts that, in rejection of nationalism, Decadents sought a community through taste and literary culture. He rightly notes that many 1890s figures attempted to form a counterculture, 'a polity apart',<sup>24</sup> and that several associated with Decadence rejected traditional nation-states. Indeed, Nordau similarly worried that Decadence would engender 'the dusk of the nations'.<sup>25</sup> However, Potolsky overstates his case when he describes Decadence as 'anti-national', as a 'critique of nationalism' and a 'subversive attack on the form of the nation'.<sup>26</sup> This stylisation overlooks the amorphous nature of Decadence and the fact that varieties of Decadence were never all that far from nationalism. For instance, Wilde, son of the nationalist poet 'Speranza', described himself as a 'recalcitrant patriot' in a letter to James Nicol Dunn,<sup>27</sup> editor the *Scots Observer*, and a 'thorough republican' on his American tour,<sup>28</sup> while he also proposed a 'Celtic' dinner to Grant Allen to 'show these tedious Angles or Teutons what a race we are'<sup>29</sup> and desired that his work, alongside George Bernard Shaw's, should form a Celtic or Hibernian School.<sup>30</sup> George Moore also mourned the lack of 'national costumes' and distinctions in a world of 'deadened conformity'; he regretted that 'the

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew Potolsky, *The Decadent Republic of Letters: Taste, Politics, and Cosmopolitan Community from Baudelaire to Beardsley* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Potolsky, pp. 54, 15, 17.

<sup>27</sup> *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. 371 (November-December 1888).

<sup>28</sup> (cited in) Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 186.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 470 (c.7 February 1891).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 563 (9 May 1893).

kilt is going or gone in the Highlands'.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, as Kirsten Macleod notes, many associated with Decadence on the British Isles were defined by 'cultural "otherness"':<sup>32</sup> she notes that Symonds and Machen were Welsh, Davidson was Scottish, Beerbohm was half-Lithuanian, Shiel was Irish/West Indian and Wilde was Irish. To this list could be added those in the Rhymers Club, namely Yeats, Todhunter and Rolleston (Irish) and Rhys (Welsh). All of these nations were pursuing cultural nationalist movements in the period and several of these figures were engaged in them. Potolsky ignores the fact that the Victorian narratives of civilisation and progress, which were resisted by the Decadents, were often the very narratives many stateless nations also critiqued or at least complicated: certain forms of late nineteenth-century nationalism were countercultures, marginalised nations resisting the larger state and its narratives of improvement. The Decadent counter-culture and peripheral nationalisms were not mutually exclusive.

Certain critics have offered more nuance when addressing Decadence and nationalism: Regenia Gagnier has shown that the Decadent stress on the breakdown of 'the whole' to the part,<sup>33</sup> as originally articulated by Nietzsche, and the desires for independence and autonomy at the *fin de siècle* could work alongside the individuation of nations and other collective groupings, as well as persons. Her most recent work is also concerned with how Decadence circulated globally and was appropriated or developed by other nations, often in the context of nationalism.<sup>34</sup> Like Gagnier, Leela Ghandi has discussed how Wilde's writings and others' inspired anticolonial movements internationally.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, by integrating the Celtic Revival, neo-Jacobitism and nationalism into the broader context of Symbolism, Pittock has demonstrated that nationalism was a 'politics suited to the Symbolist critique of

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<sup>31</sup> George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man* (London: William Heinemann, 1917), p. 142.

<sup>32</sup> Kirsten Macleod, *Fictions of British Decadence: High Art, Popular Writing, and the Fin de Siècle* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Regenia Gagnier, *Individualism, Decadence and Cosmopolitanism: On the Relationship of Part to Whole, 1859-1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Regenia Gagnier, 'The Global Circulation of Literatures of Decadence', *Literature Compass*, 10.1 (2013), 70-81.

<sup>35</sup> Leela Ghandi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin de Siècle Radicalism and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 174-176.

modern culture'.<sup>36</sup> Linda Dowling's *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (1986) also shows that there could be ties between nationhood and some Decadent linguistic ideas, particularly with Yeats. These works have helped lay the groundwork for this present study. In order to examine Scottish Decadence, we must remember the complications with Decadence: it can be as close to nationalism as it can be distanced from it.

The second main problem in criticism that has deterred considerations of Scottish Decadence is that scholars of Scottish literature, while magnifying the significance of the Kailyard, have largely neglected to study other facets of the 1890s, namely Decadence. This tendency has allowed some warped ideas about the period to flourish, none more so evident than in Stuart Kelly's essay 'Scotland and Decadence' (2006). Here, Kelly argues that Decadence could not develop in Scotland as it was more greatly influenced by the Reformation: 'industrious, restraint and gravity became the cardinal virtues [in Scotland]; fecklessness, indulgence and frivolity the mortal sins'.<sup>37</sup> He also notes that 'Scotland had no leisure class' to harbour Decadence,<sup>38</sup> ignoring the facts that Scotland was one of the world's wealthiest nations in the 1890s and that Decadence was not limited to the leisure class. Although not written for a scholarly publication, Kelly's essay is not unlike the many other characterisations of the late-Victorian Scottish mentality as dour and insular. Fortunately, art historians have produced better work and noted ties between Decadence and Scottish culture – these include Robin Nicholson's article on *The Evergreen*, 'From Fever to Fresh Air' (2004), which discusses the 'ferment of decadence and anti-decadence'<sup>39</sup> in the mid-1890s and shows how *The Evergreen* embodies these dual positions, much like Pittock and Jack's 'Patrick Geddes and the Celtic Revival'. These are welcome contributions that have created space to consider Decadence in the context of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish

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<sup>36</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, *Spectrum of Decadence: The Literature of the 1890s* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 86.

<sup>37</sup> Stuart Kelly, 'Scotland and Decadence', in *The Decadent Handbook*, ed. by Rowan Pelling (Sawtry: Dedalus, 2006), pp. 54-57 (p. 55).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> Robin Nicholson, "'From Fever to Fresh Air': *The Evergreen*, *The Yellow Book* and the Threat of Decadence', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 9 (2004), 63-68 (p. 65).

cultural nationalism.<sup>40</sup> To unlock our understanding of Decadence in Scotland, we need to break with superficial characterisations of Scotland, cultural nationalism and Decadence that leave them appearing antagonistic.

In order to understand this movement, the loose connections between some of the various figures involved needs to be grasped, as well as their collaborations. The thesis's third research question is to consider the extent and significance of collaboration between Scottish cultural nationalists. In the thirty years between 1960 and 1990, the detail of material on individuals associated with *fin-de-siècle* Scotland certainly increased and monographs on various figures were published. These included Philip Boardman's *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator and Peace-warrior* (1978) and Flavia Alaya's *William Sharp – "Fiona Macleod", 1855-1905* (1970). However, in much of the criticism from this period, Scottish art was not considered from a national perspective, reflected in the common tendency to divide the Glasgow School and the Outlook Tower into independent, rather than similar, loosely connected, movements. Consequently, the existence of any national trends across Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere were ignored or denied. This is evident in *Scotland Creates* (1990), edited by Wendy Kaplan, which, despite covering 5000 years of art, included individual chapters on 'Glasgow in 1900' and 'Edinburgh at the Turn of the Century', by Roger Billcliffe and Elizabeth Cumming respectively. Billcliffe's note that Glasgow artists 'even' went on to work in Edinburgh is a sign of how little awareness there was of common ideas and collaboration between the two cities or cultural nationalism in this period.<sup>41</sup> William Hardie considers the era in one chapter in *Scottish Painting* (1976) but also notes that *fin-de-siècle* Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee were 'little related'.<sup>42</sup> These treatments reflect the increase in academic specialism and mono-discipline studies in this period: both of these methodologies struggled to engage with the connectedness of these figures or

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<sup>40</sup> Kelly does interestingly note that the word 'decadence' enters the English language in *The Complaynt of Scotland* (1549), a text which pressed 'Scotland's claims as an independent, sovereign country' (p. 54).

<sup>41</sup> Roger Billcliffe, 'How Many Swallows make a Summer? Art and Design in Glasgow in 1900', in *Scotland Creates: 5000 years of art and design*, ed. by Wendy Kaplan (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1990), pp. 136-148 (p. 136).

<sup>42</sup> William Hardie, *Scottish Painting: 1837 to the Present* (Glasgow: Waverley Books, 2010), p. 110.

understand the importance of cross-disciplinarity to their work. These studies also left the cultural nationalist issue unspoken and therefore sought no national connections.

More recently, several works (almost exclusively by art historians) have demonstrated how inter-connected some of the figures discussed here were. Perhaps the best example of this is Elizabeth Cumming's *Hand, Heart and Soul: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland* (2006) which approached Scottish art in the period from a national perspective, bringing various parts of the nation together for the first time. Lindsay Errington's 'Celtic Elements in Scottish Art at the Turn of the Century', in *The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art* (1989), also successfully united John Duncan, E. A. Hornel, George Henry and Phoebe Traquair with Geddes and Sharp, breaking down both the Glasgow-Edinburgh/Dundee divide but also the literature-art divide. Duncan Macmillan's *Scottish Art* (1990) also moves effortlessly between Glasgow and Edinburgh in his two chapters on the late nineteenth century. This thesis develops upon these gains and extends out to consider an even broader range of individuals, bringing more literary and visual artists together: the cultural nationalist movement in Scotland and its widespread significance can only be delineated when a large scope is considered.

Part of the reason this movement has been neglected by literary critics is that the culture of the period is still read in opposition to, and inferior to, Modernism in Scotland, as is detailed above. In order to overcome this misreading and unlock the continuities between the periods, this thesis will question to what extent there were ties between the 1890s and the development of Modernism, the fourth research question. In various other critical cultures, the 1890s is now commonly read as the beginning of Modernist developments, evident in Malcolm Bradbury and James Macfarlane's *Modernism* (1991) which provided a guide to Modernist literature in Europe, covering 1890-1930. In Scottish Literature, these connections simply have not been activated. Historians of Scottish Art have led the way in this regard: Macmillan's subtitle for his chapter on the 1890s in *Scottish Art* is 'The opening of the

Modern Era', <sup>43</sup> while Howarth's ground-breaking study *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement* (1952) has nurtured widespread understanding that Mackintosh was an early Modernist architect and designer. However, given the problematic narratives of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish culture by literary critics, substantial continuity has not been acknowledged in the field of Scottish Literature; if anything, the two periods are read in opposition. Douglas Gifford has recently suggested that we should reconsider the perceived antagonism between the *fin de siècle* and Modernism as Scottish culture 'may' have been in a 'state of revival' between 1880 and 1920, although he still peddles the notion that it was not a national identity revival. I confirm here that there was continuity.<sup>44</sup> Given MacDiarmid's characterisations of Geddes and Cunninghame Graham as two of the great Scots, outlined in this thesis's Conclusion, there is certainly scope to do this. Sharp engaged with Belgian culture in a similar manner to MacDiarmid, which invites discussion too (Chapter 2), as do Geddes's comments on Celtic art and aesthetics which reveal some common ground held with Modernists, discussed in Chapters 2 and 5. Furthermore, while there have been general studies on the links between Decadence and Modernism, such as David Weir's *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (1995), because there has been little discussion of Decadence in Scotland there has been little examination of how Scottish Decadence contributed to the emergence of Modernism. The 1890s anticipated Modernism in various ways and these ideas need to be acknowledged more widely in Scotland.

These four questions all attempt to historically situate the Scots Renaissance and unlock its defining features. By posing these questions, this thesis offers the first detailed analysis of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism, the roles that Decadence played in developing it, and its impact on twentieth-century Scottish culture. By addressing these questions, not only will our understanding of *fin-de-siècle* Scotland be improved but also our understanding of overarching Scottish

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<sup>43</sup> Duncan Macmillan, *Scottish Art 1460-1990* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1990), p. 291.

<sup>44</sup> Douglas Gifford, 'Preparing for Renaissance: Revaluing Nineteenth-Century Scottish Literature', in *Scotland and the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century World*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and others (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 21-35 (p. 27).

cultural narratives. This thesis will also sharpen our awareness of the various forms that Decadence could take, and the roles it could play in cultural-political developments.

### **iii. Parameters**

This thesis demonstrates that the Scots Renaissance was not an idea contained by Geddes's essay of that name, or even his circle in Edinburgh, but was a movement: similar ideas were being expressed throughout Scotland. The thesis considers the Outlook Tower circle (including Geddes, Sharp, Duncan) alongside the likes of Robert Louis Stevenson, John Buchan, Margaret Macdonald and John Stuart Blackie. Some of the figures discussed have been brought together before but this is the first study that brings them all together. I particularly stress that the Glasgow School's activities have to be considered alongside Geddes's Outlook Tower projects. Not only did Geddes admire the Glasgow School's work (he named the Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art building 'one of the most important buildings in Europe')<sup>45</sup> and members of the Glasgow School collaborated with Edinburgh artists (evident in their pageantry work and Mackintosh's later 'Arcades for Lucknow' architectural designs for Geddes)<sup>46</sup> but Geddes even discussed bringing the Glasgow School into 'our artistic movement' in the 1890s.<sup>47</sup> The fact that so much of their work shares Decadent tropes and performs a similar type of cultural nationalism means they need to be considered together in a national context. The thesis also gives space to John Davidson as a representative example of someone who opposed Scottish cultural nationalism, which helps us understand the Scots Renaissance and endorse its existence.

The majority of the material treated here focuses on the circle around Geddes, the Romance Revival writers and the Glasgow School, but their work speaks to an

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<sup>45</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Aesthetics - on the utilitarian contempt, indifference and distrust of aesthetics' [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/3/70].

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion on Mackintosh's designs for Geddes, see Volker M. Welter, 'Arcades for Lucknow: Patrick Geddes, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Reconstruction of the City', *Architectural History*, 43 (1999), 316-332.

<sup>47</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes for a lecture to the Celtic Society, 1897 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/9].



even wider cultural trend in Scotland. Although not comprehensive, the thesis stretches out to many of the other figures who were connected to these developments to demonstrate the breadth of Scottish cultural nationalism in the period, including Douglas Ainslie and William Hole. While there are ties between the literature dubbed 'Kailyard' and the *fin-de-siècle* Scottish movement (S. R. Crockett contributed to *The Evergreen*), since Nash's work has already improved our understanding of such literature, this thesis concentrates on enhancing our understanding of other aspects of Scottish culture. As those who were associated with the Glasgow School, Outlook Tower and Romance Revival were largely Anglophone, this thesis will focus on writing in English and Scots but, given Gaelic culture was not removed from this sphere – Geddes defended the study of Gaelic and Elizabeth Sharp's *Lyra Celtica* contains translated Gaelic pieces, for instance –<sup>48</sup> the thesis hopes to open up debates and avenues that may stimulate discussions on the movement's links to Gaelic culture. Thus, although wide-ranging, the thesis is not exhaustive.

It is crucial to stress that the Scots Renaissance was a loose movement. For *The Evergreen* alone, Geddes (with William Macdonald) noted that it was a collection by those who 'after some solitary wandering silently flow together, uniting their microscopic forces into a vague semi-fluent mass'.<sup>49</sup> The stress was on being 'protean yet individual', which the magazine encouraged as it had no 'individual or continuous editorship': each was 'a law unto themselves'.<sup>50</sup> This idea applies to Scottish cultural nationalism as a whole: each figure considered was very much individual but their work exhibits signs of a wider cultural trend. In terms of ideas, these figures are connected by a resistance to a London-centric cultural dynamic or narratives of stadialism, coupled with an enthusiasm for emerging cultural (and, at times, political) nationalism. Stylistically, these figures were also connected by their use of Decadent tropes while also drawing from the revivals in the period that were linked to nationhood, including: the Celtic Revival, the Scottish Baronial Revival, the Romance

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<sup>48</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Keltic Art', 26 July 1899, pp. 1-7 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/7].

<sup>49</sup> Patrick Geddes and William Macdonald, 'Envoy', *The Evergreen*, 4 (1896), 155-156 (p. 155).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

Revival and neo-Jacobitism. Using traditional or indigenous styles from various cultures, as well as Medieval and Early-Renaissance styles, many of these figures challenged materialistic representation and notions of high art, reclaiming past 'stages'.

The temporal parameters chosen for discussion here are 1880 to 1914. It was in the early 1880s that notions of a disruptive Decadence were being articulated, particularly in France, and when Home Rule debates and cultural nationalism were gaining momentum. Some of Stevenson's most successful works were also written in the early 1880s. Due to several cultural changes, the onset of the First World War in particular, the Scots Renaissance lost steam by 1914: commissions were drying up in Glasgow, leading Mackintosh and Macdonald to move to Chelsea; the Home Rule debate became less of a priority in parliament; and Geddes started to spend much of his time in India. However, although 1880-1914 will largely be focussed on, where there is clear continuity with later figures or a writer's or artist's work carries on a similar trajectory after 1914 these will be noted to tie the period to larger developments.

#### **iv. Methodology**

An interdisciplinary methodology has been selected to research this topic. This is vital for several reasons. First, Decadence was not a movement limited to either literature or the visual arts and the two often complemented each other: Decadent texts included illustrations (such as Beardsley's work for Wilde's *Salome*) and the two were also brought together through the likes of *The Yellow Book*. This was no different in Scotland: *The Evergreen* is analogous to *The Yellow Book* in including plates in similar styles, along with Celtic head and tailpieces. Furthermore, Errington's 'Celtic Elements in Scottish Art at the Turn of the Century' demonstrates how Duncan drew from Sharp's writings in his work and how this contributed towards a culture of 'national

consciousness-raising'.<sup>51</sup> Given Geddes was a committed generalist, as Chapter 5 details, to engage with his work through a mono-discipline study would misrepresent his ideas. Scotland's connections to wider *fin-de-siècle* culture and the nature of the Scots Renaissance can only be activated when a wider scope of disciplines is considered.

An interdisciplinary methodology has also been selected because, as has been demonstrated, art historians generally have a more sophisticated understanding of 1890s Scottish culture in the period than literary critics and it is necessary to extend on the historicist approach of Morrison and others in order to further our understanding of the history and the literature of the period. A real problem with criticism on *fin-de-siècle* Scottish literature is that it ignores or belittles Scotland's socio-political and international contexts (as well as its contemporary visual art culture) too frequently. To counter this, the thesis adopts a historicist methodology: I continually discuss the Scots Renaissance in the context of political and cultural debates at the time. Geddes believed his Scots Renaissance movement could support the Scottish Home Rule movement that emerged in this period (which is detailed in Chapter 1). He wrote in a letter: 'I can do my best service to the cause [Home Rule] by working at the realities of the Scots Renaissance'.<sup>52</sup> He also backed the expansion of civic Scotland: for instance, he believed that 'so many of the latent possibilities of Magna Scotia' depended on the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (founded in 1884).<sup>53</sup> He even proposed the design for a National Institute of Geography in Edinburgh.<sup>54</sup> However, there was an anxiety across the movement over political circumstances: although many were keen to assert the cultural autonomy of Scotland, there was a concern over how this could compromise Scotland's imperial role. This

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<sup>51</sup> Lindsay Errington, 'Celtic Elements in Scottish Art at the Turn of the Century', in *The Last Romantics: The Romantic Tradition in British Art*, ed. by John Christian (London: Lund Humphries Publishers, 1989), pp. 47-54 (p. 53).

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Patrick Geddes to Mr Campbell, 1 November 1895 [National Library of Scotland: MS 10508A].

<sup>53</sup> Patrick Geddes, [Preface to] 'A Northern College: An Experimental Study in Higher Education', p. 10 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/61].

<sup>54</sup> Plan for a National Institute of Geography, 1902 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 22/1/British Isles/Scotland/539/1].

concern created a very particular cultural nationalist movement which becomes clear when the movement is compared to *fin-de-siècle* cultural nationalism in Ireland.

The thesis brings figures together and places them in relation to cultural nationalism and Decadence but it does not simply consider old material in new contexts. This thesis draws on various archives to contribute new information to the period, which is analysed to develop a more incisive understanding of the movement. Part of the reason this cultural nationalist movement has been ignored is that critics have not engaged with it in any depth at archive level: this material provides detail and clarity to the people – their views, their work and their interests – activating their position in 1890s Scottish cultural nationalism. For instance, the reason the Outlook Tower's projects are often simply styled as sociological and reformist is that archives need to be consulted to unlock their mysticism and occultism, as Chapter 4 will reveal.

## **v. Defining Cultural Nationalism and Decadence**

I focus on two concepts to help illustrate the particularities of this movement: cultural nationalism and Decadence. John Hutchinson has noted that 'there are two quite different types of nationalism – cultural and political – that must not be conflated for they articulate different, even competing conceptions of the nation, form their own distinctive organisations, and have sharply diverging political strategies'.<sup>55</sup> While he defines political nationalists as those who aim 'to secure a representative state for their community', he frames cultural nationalists as those who want to regenerate and define the national community: an ideology that 'opposes assimilation of the community to any universal model of development' and 'seeks to re-unite the different aspects of the nation' (p. 123). His characterisations leave little room for diversity: for Hutchinson, cultural nationalists respect the 'natural divisions within the nation – sexual, occupational, religious and regional', as opposed to the political nationalist who is concerned with the 'civic *polity*' (p. 122). This understanding of cultural nationalists

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<sup>55</sup> John Hutchinson, 'Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration', in *Nationalism*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 122-131 (p. 122) [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

as essentialists is not taken up in this thesis as certain figures associated with the Scots Renaissance challenged gendered divisions, for instance Sharp (discussed in detail in Chapter 3). Despite this, the thesis does adopt Hutchinson's broad distinction: cultural nationalism is taken to mean distinguishing, reclaiming and defending national cultures and identities: whereas political nationalism aims to distinguish the nation through parliamentary and political means (through Secretaries, legislatures and states), cultural nationalism concerns (re)defining the nation's culture, protecting it from the forces of assimilation and centralisation. I also adopt Hutchinson's clarification that cultural nationalists are not fundamentally political but 'are often driven into state politics to defend the cultural autonomy of the nation' (p. 125) and that they present the nation 'in active contact with other societies' (p. 131). The cultural nationalists discussed here certainly need to be examined in the context of political nationalism and they were also vigorously international in their thinking, as Chapter 2 details.

There was no one cultural nationalism in this period in Scotland; there were several that could challenge each other. The Scots Renaissance largely drew from visual and mythical languages particular to the nation (such as Celtic and Baronial tropes) or revived ancestral identities to help distinguish Scotland's culture and challenge narratives of improvement. Geddes wanted to style 'our Scottish, our Celtic Renaissance',<sup>56</sup> explicitly conflating Scotland with Celticism; as will be demonstrated, part of Geddes's interest in Celtic culture was underpinned by a desire to purge Scottish Saxonism and resist assimilation, to orient Scottish cultural identification towards Celtic culture. It was a movement criticised for having 'no Celtic pedigree',<sup>57</sup> as Neil Munro, the 'lost leader of Scottish Nationalism',<sup>58</sup> stated. Munro forcefully attacked *The Evergreen*, took issue with the very idea of cultural 'Renaissance' and mocked both the culture of the Glasgow School and Decadence.<sup>59</sup> He preferred what

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<sup>56</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Scots Renaissance', *The Evergreen*, 1 (1895), 131-139 (p. 139).

<sup>57</sup> (cited in) Lesley Lendrum, *Neil Munro: The Biography* (Colonsay: House of Lochar, 2004), p. 65.

<sup>58</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, ed. by Alan Riach (Manchester: Carcanet, 1995), p. 21.

<sup>59</sup> Allan Young MacDougall, *The Journalism of Neil Munro: Fiction Criticism and Cultural Comment* [unpublished masters thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011], pp. 61-65, 74-75, 107.

he saw as the more faithful, antiquarian Celtic scholarship of Alexander Carmichael.<sup>60</sup> Munro's *Evergreen*-Carmichael dichotomy is problematic as Carmichael contributed to *The Evergreen*: we cannot simplify the Celtic Revival into two camps. Indeed, Carmichael's contribution to *The Evergreen* ('The Land of Lorne and the Satirists of Taynuilt') conflated Scottish national culture with Celtic culture, in much the same manner as Geddes; as Murdo Macdonald notes: 'Carmichael makes a direct contribution to the synthesis of Scots and Celtic Revivals, by speculating on the Celtic, indeed Bardic, aspects of Robert Burns' ancestry'.<sup>61</sup> This essay reflected a desire felt amongst many in the movement to associate Scottish national culture with Celtic identity. Nevertheless, Munro's comments provide an example of someone associated with cultural nationalism who was antagonistic towards the Scots Renaissance. Thus, this thesis examines a particular form of cultural nationalism that developed in Scotland, one underpinned by revival and supported by Decadence, rather than providing an exhaustive understanding of cultural nationalism in Scotland in the period.

When treating this cultural nationalist movement, I will often refer to it, as Geddes did, as the 'Scots Renaissance' or the 'movement of Renaissance'.<sup>62</sup> I have chosen to keep this spelling of 'Renaissance' for various reasons. First, it is likely that Geddes selected the spelling derived from Latin over the French consciously as Latin is frequently used in *The Evergreen* when invoking Scottish patriotism or icons (for example, 'Ultimus Scotorum' and 'Maria Regina Scotorum'),<sup>63</sup> most likely to appeal to a time (pre-Reformation) when he believed Scottish nationality was stronger. Furthermore, the use of Latin also ties this expression to *fin-de-siècle* Decadence as the 'late-imperial imaginings' of Decadence often took their inspiration from late Latin literature, which had been discussed in a study by Désiré Nisard (1834).<sup>64</sup> The term is also useful as it prevents confusion with the 1920s movement, which is often referred to as the Scottish Renaissance. The Latin spelling here reminds us that the Scots

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<sup>60</sup> Lendrum, p. 65.

<sup>61</sup> Murdo Macdonald, 'Celticism and Internationalism in the circle of Patrick Geddes', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6.2 (2005), 69-83 (p. 76).

<sup>62</sup> [NLS: MS 10508A].

<sup>63</sup> 'The Scots Renaissance', p. 132.

<sup>64</sup> Stephen Romer, 'Introduction', in *French Decadent Tales*, trans. by Stephen Romer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. ix-xxxv (p. x).

Renascence should be studied and appreciated on its own terms and not simply reduced to a pre-Scottish Renaissance phase, although lines of continuity certainly exist (two of which are traced in Chapters 2 and 3).

In order to understand the cultural nationalism of the Scots Renascence, it is necessary to consider it in terms of *fin-de-siècle* culture. The thesis will demonstrate that this movement was closely tied to *fin-de-siècle* culture and had particular links to varieties of Decadence. It is argued that Decadence provided styles, ideas and tropes that supported the aims of Scottish cultural nationalists and was integral to developing their movement. These figures could style themselves as Decadents, sympathise with Decadent ideas, identify them as a market and their works were often reviewed in the context of Decadence. Many works by Scottish cultural nationalists were consistent with a certain variety of Decadence.

Decadence remains as fraught a term today as it was in the 1890s. The word, which 'derives from the Latin *decadēre*, a "falling down" or "falling away"',<sup>65</sup> was often a label used to critique people, ideas or groups, usually for their subversion of late-Victorian hegemonic ideas and narratives. Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (published in German in 1892 and English in 1895), a text which is referred to throughout as it is emblematic of the anti-Decadent stadialism that existed at the *fin de siècle*, sought to extend the classification of medical degeneracy to certain artists who he felt were the 'enemy of progress' – artists who impeded those who wanted to 'spread enlightenment' (science, modernity and industry).<sup>66</sup> They were the degenerates or decadents. In 1893, Arthur Symonds, a man often included in the Decadent canon, similarly suggested that the Decadents were out of step with the established flow of progress, although he was less critical of this: he styled the Decadent as 'over-luxurious, over-inquiring, too languid [...] too uncertain' and described Des Esseintes, the 'typical decadent' of Huysmans's *À Rebours*, as 'over-civilised', replaying Nisard's

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<sup>65</sup> Alex Murray and Jason David Hall, 'Introduction: Decadent Poetics', in *Decadent Poetics: Literature and Form at the British Fin de Siècle*, ed. by Alex Murray and Jason David Hall (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 1- 25 (p. 1).

<sup>66</sup> Nordau, p. 560.

idea of Decadence.<sup>67</sup> Decadence was a label often projected on to those who were felt to run *against the grain* of nineteenth-century narratives of improvement and progress.

However, Decadence was used in an antithetical fashion: some individuals cast the industrious, utilitarian Victorian middle class as 'over-civilised' or 'degenerate', viewing it as a sphere that had lost its ideals in favour of commerce. For instance, George Moore in his semi-autobiographical *Confessions of a Young Man* (1886) – which Sharp reviewed – complained that modern developments had made the world 'too highly civilised' and noted that 'we are now in a period of decadence growing steadily more and more acute'.<sup>68</sup> For Kirsten Macleod, '*Confessions* celebrates the emergence of a defiant oppositional culture' and this culture saw what it was opposing as Decadent.<sup>69</sup> Similar views are articulated by Baudelaire, who will be treated in more detail in Chapter 2, who depicts 'bourgeois mediocrity' as the true savagery,<sup>70</sup> and by Wilde's Vivian who portrays contemporary society as the 'degraded race' in 'The Decay of Lying' (1891).<sup>71</sup> Edward Carpenter also rendered civilisation as a disease in 'Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure' (1889). For these individuals, the 'industriousness, earnestness and utilitarianism of the Victorian middle class', that Macleod describes,<sup>72</sup> embodied a myth of progress and their 'counter-discourse' attempted to reveal the true degeneracy of their supposedly progressive society.<sup>73</sup> Those artists who loathed the middle class were as antagonistic to it as the middle class was towards those who threatened their hegemonic ideas.<sup>74</sup> These two narratives could even occasionally intersect in Decadent writing: in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *Axël* (published posthumously in 1890), Axel states: 'Living? The servants will

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<sup>67</sup> Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, ed. by Matthew Creasy (Manchester: Carcanet, 2014), pp. 170, 180.

<sup>68</sup> Moore, pp. 143-144.

<sup>69</sup> Macleod, p. 68.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1995), p. 101.

<sup>71</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Plays, Prose Writings and Poems* (London: Everyman's Library, 1991), p. 80.

<sup>72</sup> Macleod, p. 21.

<sup>73</sup> Macleod, p. 20.

<sup>74</sup> For discussion on the middle class disdain for those they branded Decadent, see Holbrook Jackson's *The Eighteen Nineties*, p. 159; for the Decadent antipathy towards the middle class, see Regenia Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1986), p. 65.



do that for us’;<sup>75</sup> a statement which both reveals Axël’s desire to dissociate himself from modern life while simultaneously validating the hierarchy that underpinned it.

Although these are just two examples of how the term Decadence was used and appropriated, they reveal how difficult the term is to pin down. This difficulty led Richard Gilman to conclude that we should ‘banish’ this word from critical terminology.<sup>76</sup> However, others, such as Potolsky, have argued that dispensing with the term ‘would distort our sense of the age’: ‘for artists, intellectuals, and the reading public in the period, decadence was a viable concept with real consequences’.<sup>77</sup> Gilman’s understanding overlooks how central the term was in the culture of the period and how this centrality reflected cultural anxieties: so many of the uses of the term during the *fin-de-siècle* point to an anxiety over the fragile narratives of progress and improvement that the Victorian commercial classes, industry and empire were built on. Although the term must be approached with care, it is a key tool for examining the *fin de siècle*.

This thesis will largely discuss the variety of Decadence associated with attempts to counter the utilitarian, progressive narratives that had taken hold by the late nineteenth century, the various expressions of the ‘anxiety of liberalism after a century of its development’.<sup>78</sup> These critiques were largely achieved through performing willed returns to the past that undermined stadialist narratives of development, moving *against the grain*. Indeed, Decadence could be underpinned by what has been called a ‘poetics of the past’.<sup>79</sup> ‘Decadents’ were often critiqued for their enthusiasm for tropes of culture associated with a previous ‘stages’ in history: the ‘symptoms’ of degenerate or Decadent art that Nordau outlines range from orientalism, occultism, Maeterlinckian mysticism, neo-Catholicism and generally activating past, Romantic histories.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> (cited in) Romer, p. xvi.

<sup>76</sup> Richard Gilman, *Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1979), p. 180.

<sup>77</sup> Potolsky, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Gagnier, *Individualism*, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Murray and Hall, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Nordau, pp. 9, 12-14, 106.

This variety of Decadence is entirely consistent with the cultural nationalist movement in Scotland. A great number of Scottish cultural nationalists used their work to critique stadialist, progressive narratives that were felt to be dividing Scottish nationality and marginalising Celtic culture (discussed in Chapter 1). In a period when industrialism and the middle class had expanded to occupy the core of society, these expressions could be strident: Sharp, writing under his most-used pseudonym – Fiona Macleod, lambasted ‘bastard utilitarianism’ in a dedication to George Meredith, matched by Geddes’s mocking expression ‘futilitarianism’.<sup>81</sup> In rejecting ‘wretched’ utilitarianism, as Mackintosh termed it,<sup>82</sup> these figures subverted an idea which could be associated with the culture of the Scottish Enlightenment in the nineteenth century, a culture which was challenged more widely (discussed in Chapters 1 and 3). They turned to and celebrated many of the ‘symptoms’ of the *fin-de-siècle* degenerate, undermining or complicating the hegemony of industrial, commercial and utilitarian culture and recovering their supposedly ‘backward’ national cultures, as well as using styles associated with Decadence. The literature and art of the Scots Renaissance could very much be *against the grain*, and analysing aspects of Decadence in Scotland helps us unlock the nature of the movement.

A consideration of this form of Decadence in the context of the Scots Renaissance is also justified because those involved in Scottish cultural nationalism discussed it, often favourably. Certainly, there were times when Geddes did reject aspects of Decadence. For instance, in one contribution he described *The Evergreen* as an alternative to ‘the all-pervading “Decadence”’.<sup>83</sup> However, as will be shown in Chapter 3, he could identify with the movement in the same magazine, treating it ‘critically yet appreciatively’,<sup>84</sup> while he also critiqued stadialist narratives and saw the

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<sup>81</sup> William Sharp, *The Sin-Eater and other tales* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1895), p. 13; Patrick Geddes, *Dramatisations of History* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1923), p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> Charles Rennie Mackintosh, ‘Untitled Paper on Architecture (c. 1892)’, in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers*, ed. by Pamela Robertson (Wendlebury: White Cockade Publishing, 1990), pp. 180-200 (p. 184).

<sup>83</sup> ‘The Scots Renaissance’, p. 136.

<sup>84</sup> T-GED 8/1/2.

Decadents as a market for *The Evergreen*.<sup>85</sup> Sharp at times identified his work as Decadent too and believed Decadence could lead to Renaissance, as I will argue in Chapter 3, as well as Chapter 2. As Kirsten Macleod notes, many associated with Decadence were ambivalent about it; that does not mean they should necessarily be neglected.<sup>86</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that some were keen to assert Scotland's place within Decadent culture, as will be seen in Chapter 1 when D. Y. Cameron's cover design for *The Yellow Book* is discussed.

The need to consider the Scottish cultural nationalist movement in the context of Decadence also becomes apparent when the reception of the movement is considered. Contemporary critics often discussed *The Evergreen*, for instance, alongside Decadence, particularly in Scotland. *The Scotsman* described it as a 'sort of Scottish "Yellow Book"' and slighted its Decadence: 'it is comical to see so many healthy young men trying to look as if they were decadent'.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, *the Glasgow Herald* associated it with ideas related to Decadence: it was 'neo-Catholic, purified-Pagan' and too 'vague and gushing for our coarsened Presbyterian tastes'.<sup>88</sup> *The Times* even described the magazine's illustrations and designs as 'Scoto-Beardsleyan'.<sup>89</sup> This Celtic Revival periodical, in its ideas, identification and reception, had ties to Decadence which strengthens the case for a consideration of Decadence in the context of Scottish cultural nationalism.

## **vi. Structure**

The body of the thesis will focus on the challenges to teleological narratives of improvement and progress in Scottish cultural nationalist literature and art and examine how this oppositional art often drew from various 'symptoms' of Decadence to achieve its ends, including: orientalism, Maeterlinckian mysticism, neo-paganism,

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<sup>85</sup> Rough notes by Patrick Geddes relating to *The Evergreen*, c.1895-1896 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/3].

<sup>86</sup> Macleod, p. 15.

<sup>87</sup> 'The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal', *The Scotsman*, 29 May 1895, p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> 'The Evergreen', *Glasgow Herald*, 27 May 1895, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> 'Some Illustrated Books', *The Times*, 24 May 1895, p. 13.

neo-Catholicism, the occult and revivals of romantic histories. These features were performed in particular ways in Scotland but they nonetheless played into a wider context. *Fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalists often found common cause with Decadence; to different degrees, they both pursued 'defiant oppositional culture[s]'.<sup>90</sup>

The thesis is arranged in a style akin to Jullian's 'chimera' structure for *Dreamers of Decadence*: each chapter focuses on at least one aspect of *fin-de-siècle* culture that was felt to be antagonistic to utilitarian, progressive ideals. Each chapter also focuses on different figures, or different aspects of their work, but nevertheless discusses them with reference to the wider context. The thesis will begin by examining the Romance Revival in the period: Chapter 1 looks at how various social and political events laid the ground for the Scots Renaissance and examines how the revival of the Romance novel supported the critique of stadialist, progressive narratives that several Scottish cultural nationalists were committed to, creating the scaffolding for the Scots Renaissance. This chapter principally examines Stevenson and Conan Doyle, but also refers to Barrie, Lang, Cunninghame Graham and Buchan. It also covers the links between Stevenson and Decadence, challenging the notion that Decadence and Romance are antithetical.<sup>91</sup> Chapter 2 demonstrates how Scottish cultural nationalists looked to other nations for inspiration or fellow feeling to develop their movement, focussing on two nations that were imperial but often associated with 'backwardness', as Scotland could be: Belgium and Japan. Through analysing the work of Sharp, Duncan and the Glasgow School, this chapter discusses how features of these cultures were yoked with Scottish culture to develop Scotland's own international ties, suggest a counter-hegemony and portray Scotland as particularly mystic, oriental and Decadent.

Chapters 3 to 5 are concerned with how Scotland tailored and celebrated its own myth of descent to unify the people and work *against the grain*. Chapter 3 examines how a particular myth of descent was created in Scotland through the *fin-de-siècle* interest in neo-paganism, principally with reference to works of Geddes,

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<sup>90</sup> Macleod, p. 68.

<sup>91</sup> For more on the relationship between Decadence and Romance, see Macleod, p. 49.

Duncan and 'Fiona Macleod'. Neo-Catholicism will also be considered in this chapter, as well as John Davidson's antagonism to both Scottish cultural nationalism and neo-paganism. The fourth chapter develops on the third and investigates occultism in *fin-de-siècle* Scotland and the role that the language of secrecy and counter-culture played in recovering an ancestral Scottish identity. The final chapter investigates how myths of descent and ideas about ancestral continuity were popularised, primarily through pageants and masques, which were contributed to by various artists and thinkers. This chapter will also explore how Scottish Arthurianism and discussions about Scotland's education system, in the context of pageantry, reflected the peculiar type of cultural nationalism that developed in Scotland. Together, these five chapters offer the first detailed considerations of a Scottish cultural nationalist movement at the *fin-de-siècle* and the performance of Decadence in Scotland.

# **1 The Foundations of the Scots Renaissance: Re-Unifying the Nation and the Role of the Late-Victorian Romance Revival**

## 1.1 Introduction

In 'The Scots Renaissance' (1895), an essay published in *The Evergreen*, Patrick Geddes calls for a revival of national culture in Scotland, rooted in a collective identification with Celtic culture. As models for this revival of nationality, he selects and equates two figures who are rarely considered in the same context by contemporary critics – Robert Louis Stevenson and John Stuart Blackie, both of whom had recently been buried:

From this pageant of Edinburgh [Blackie's funeral] it is but one step in thought to that solitary Samoan hill, up which dusky chiefs and clansmen, henceforth also brethren of ours, as he of theirs, were so lately bearing our other greatest dead – the foremost son of Edinburgh and Scotland. The leader of nationality in ripest age, the leader of literature in fullest prime, have alike left us. Each was in his own way 'Ultimus Scotorum'; each in his own way the link with our best days of nationality and genius.<sup>92</sup>

For Geddes, not only their deaths but what they stood for brought the nation together and helped stimulate a revival of Scottish nationality. The language Geddes uses in the article reflects this unification, particularly in the word choice of first paragraph: 'uniting', 'merged', 'communion', 'multitude', and 'interpulsating' (p. 131). Geddes attributes this unification to the type of nationality Blackie and Stevenson stood for: one which is more fully engaged with its own history, intent on developing a civic culture and its 'manhood' (p. 133), and one that does not suffer from the 'fool's paradise' (p. 134) of 'narrower' (p. 134) nationality but instead functions in an international context. The importance of a united, distinct Scottish culture is also reflected in his use of the term 'Ultimus Scotorum' which was often associated with attempts to differentiate Scotland, such as the description of the Jacobite, Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, as 'ultime Scotorum' in Archibald Pitcairne's elegy for him, translated by Dryden.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, by allying the Samoans, who were

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<sup>92</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Scots Renaissance', *The Evergreen*, 1 (1895), 131-139 (pp. 132-3) [future references to this issue are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>93</sup> For a detailed discussion on this elegy, see Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 151.

pursuing Home Rule – which Stevenson supported, with Scotland’s clansmen, Geddes may also have been articulating the importance of political distinctiveness too, which Blackie and Stevenson supported in different ways. Geddes styles his Scots Renaissance as a development from both of their foundational endeavours that, he believes, have allowed Scottish nationality to emerge, like ‘the little mound of heather, opening into bloom’ (p. 132) on Blackie’s coffin.

This chapter will examine how the ground was laid to build a (re)unified Scottish culture in the latter half of the nineteenth century by examining the common developments in civic culture and literature, which Geddes believed were embodied by the work of Blackie and Stevenson, while emphasising that both developments involved many more individuals. Initially, the chapter will identify how divided Scotland was often perceived to be in the Victorian period between the Highlands and Lowlands, Celt and Teuton, and how this imagined division undermined the development of a common image of the nation and its nationality. Colin Kidd has demonstrated that such division was nurtured by narratives of stadialism and ‘civilisation’, that imagined society as progressing through a series of stages, which marginalised particular lifestyles and cultures considered ‘backward’. Following this, I argue that there were various political and cultural activities that sought to overcome the perceived divisions in Scotland and establish a national civic culture. Akin to *fin-de-siècle* Decadence in many ways, narratives of ‘civilisation’ were increasingly questioned by figures in Victorian Scotland. These historical discussions will be used as a basis which will be developed on and referred back to throughout the thesis; they also provide the much-needed and widely overlooked historical contexts for considering *fin-de-siècle* Scotland.

Building on this historical foundation, I then devote attention to the late-Victorian Romance Revival in Scottish literature, which reflected and furthered the attempts to establish a stronger, unified sense of Scottish nationality that had been developing over the previous decades. Romance novels in the late-Victorian period, which tended to involve crossing political and cultural borders in the framework of



empire, could lend themselves well to cultural nationalist projects that interrogated power dynamics between cultures and narratives of improvement. Here, I focus on Stevenson, who Geddes also wanted to publish a volume on,<sup>94</sup> and discuss how he interrogated the divisions in Scottish nationality, re-imagined Scottish communal identity and culture as unified, and how he styled it in opposition to England. This section of the chapter then expands out from Stevenson to consider how the Romance genre more generally was used to support Scottish cultural nationalism, using the works of Arthur Conan Doyle, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Andrew Lang, J. M. Barrie and John Buchan as examples. These writers all performed fundamental aspects of Scottish cultural nationalism in the period and they need to be considered in light of each other: removing Stevenson and the Romance Revival from the historical context and the likes of Blackie's aims greatly hinders our understanding of Scottish culture in this period. In order to fully grasp the intentions of Geddes, and those working around him with similar preoccupations, we must understand what traditions Geddes placed the Scottish Movement in and saw it building on.

This chapter will primarily focus on the first of the thesis's research questions: establishing to what extent the development of the Scottish movement was a cultural reflection of wider political and historical concerns and examining the relationship of Scotland to Ireland in the period, although these discussions will be continued throughout the thesis. The problematic role of the Enlightenment in the development of Scotland's cultural identity, a further part of the first research question – which will be developed on in Chapter 3, will also be introduced here. This chapter will treat question three by demonstrating the need to consider Scotland's writers and political figures together to unlock an understanding of what was broadly occurring in Scotland in this period. The chapter also lays the ground for the second research question by considering how the Romance Revival and the increasing critiques of stadialist narratives anticipated *fin-de-siècle* cultural movements; the Romance Revival was closer to Aestheticism and Decadence than tends to be acknowledged.

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<sup>94</sup> Rough notes by Patrick Geddes relating to *The Evergreen* c.1895-6 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/3].

## 1.2 Divided Ethnicities

Robert J. C. Young has argued that, following the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the arrival of a Hanoverian King, the 'Celtic', Arthurian encoding of ethnicity in England gave way to 'an alternative Whig history, which stressed the nation's English Protestant identity and its Saxon constitutional freedoms. Protestantism was always (ahistorically) Saxon and English. The Arthur who had united the diverse inhabitants of Britain was replaced by an identification with the Saxon English Alfred'.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, over the next century there was an increased marginalising of the non-Saxon inheritance in England, which was displaced through attempts to develop a 'Saxonist purity',<sup>96</sup> rooted in the national characteristics outlined by Tacitus (primarily love of liberty and self-reliance) and this helped distinguish England from Catholicism.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, according to Hugh A. MacDougall, part of the explanation for the rise of Anglo-Saxonism in humanist Germany involved a desire to reject 'papal influence' and 'Latin enemies'. He also notes that Martin Luther's defence of German identity in laying the grounds for Protestantism had a great influence on English reformers.<sup>98</sup>

This development had important implications for Scotland, where many of British Protestantism's supporting ideological structures were developed. In his article 'Teutonic Ethnology and Scottish Nationalist Inhibition, 1780-1880', Colin Kidd demonstrates that, following the Union and the Jacobite Rebellion, a dynamic emerged which divided the Scottish nation and 'diluted the ethnocentric element which was such an important feature of nineteenth-century nationalisms'.<sup>99</sup> He argues that various Enlightenment figures attempted to highlight the supposed Teutonic ethnicity of the Scottish Lowlands as a means to integrate Scotland into the English 'economic

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<sup>95</sup> Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 16.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1982), pp. 43-44.

<sup>99</sup> Colin Kidd, 'Teutonic Ethnology and the Scottish Nationalist Inhibition, 1780-1880', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 74 (1995), 45-68 (p. 46).

and imperialist core' and distance themselves from the Jacobites.<sup>100</sup> This involved developing an image of an underlying Teutonic racial heritage, like that which England had styled for itself, in order to validate the parliamentary Union and the Lowlanders' ability to manage the imperial economy. As had occurred in England, this involved marginalising the 'Celtic' features of Scotland, and any features which did not comply with stadialist progress. This ethnic mythology became markedly territorialised in Scotland. Hume and Robertson were particularly influential in developing this model; Murray Pittock argues that they created 'a division between the "Germanic" Lowlands (forward-looking, commercial, liberty-loving, and British) and the "Celtic" Highlands (backward, rebellious, violent, and indolent). Britishness was posited on a myth of unitary ethnicity, which happily also divided Scottish identity and thus undermined Scottish nationality'.<sup>101</sup> Pinkerton was equally committed to this collective identity dynamic, portraying the Highlanders as Celtic, 'a race incapable of labour' in 1789,<sup>102</sup> while perceiving Lowland Scots to be capable of conceding to 'English improvements'.<sup>103</sup> The philosopher and historian John Millar also claimed the Scots had a Saxon heritage and such claims meant that 'English historical models were transferred to Scotland, and Scotland's own history provincialised'.<sup>104</sup> Attempts 'to break that will to unity', within Scotland, were clearly performed.<sup>105</sup> The Scottish Lowland identity became defined in opposition to its Highland counterpart (one supportive of economic liberalism, the other hostile to it) creating a collective identity dynamic founded on a binary opposition within the nation, that encouraged hostility and division.

The cultural application of this dynamic was rarely as resilient as Enlightenment theorists might have hoped. Conceding to an 'English' national ethnicity would have compromised the Scottish nationality, thus the dynamic which the Enlightenment

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>101</sup> Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 64.

<sup>102</sup> John Pinkerton, *An Enquiry into the History of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1814), I, p. 28.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>104</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, 'Historiography', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. by Alexander Brodie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 258-279 (p. 265).

<sup>105</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 128

thinkers developed only partially took root. Even Lowland Unionists, such as Sir Walter Scott, could complicate the model which they appeared to support, working within and against the Celt-Teuton binary. Scott replays, with some amendments, the racial territorialism of the Enlightenment in his 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry' (1830) which were appended to *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*: 'Excepting, therefore, the provinces of Berwickshire and the Lothians, which were chiefly inhabited by an Anglo-Saxon population, the whole of Scotland was peopled by different tribes of the same aboriginal [Celtic] race'.<sup>106</sup> Here, we find a typical example of Scott's anxiety with the Enlightenment model: he concedes that there was Germanic penetration into Scotland but he reduces it to the Lothians and Berwick; far more restricted than Hume's 'all the Lowlands' claim in 1754.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, this marginalising of the Saxon presence in Scotland allows him to claim that, otherwise, the 'whole' of Scotland is Celtic, invoking the language of common nationhood. Similarly, he acknowledges the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon language but does not pass judgement on the Celts maintaining their music, customs and dynasty.<sup>108</sup>

These complications are also central to Scott's fiction. For example, in 'The Two Drovers', from *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827), Scott presents a Highlander (Robin Oig MacCombich) who is at odds with Lowland, and specifically English, civility, embodied by his act of killing Wakefield. MacCombich's revenge is characterised by the judge as an act of 'wild untutored justice';<sup>109</sup> however the audience in the court also interprets it as a 'false idea of honour rather than as flowing from a heart naturally savage' (p. 234). Highlanders are also portrayed as displaying 'patient endurance and active exertion' (p. 203), countering Pinkerton's assessment of the Celts as indolent, while Wakefield, the Englishman, is described as 'irascible' (p. 211), more like the stereotyped image of the Highlander. Furthermore, the Highland spaewife's prediction that there will be a disaster if Robin goes to England, after

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<sup>106</sup> Walter Scott, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Richard Cadell, 1849), 1, p. 28.

<sup>107</sup> David Hume, *The History of England: from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to The Revolution in 1688*, 6 vols (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983), 1, p. 23.

<sup>108</sup> Scott, *The Minstrelsy*, p. 30.

<sup>109</sup> Walter Scott, *Chronicles of the Canongate* (London: John C Nimmo, 1894), p. 239 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

seeing 'Saxon blood' on his hands at the beginning of the novel, is authenticated (p. 209) – the Celt proves to have wisdom while simultaneously being portrayed as more irrational. Scott presents his readership with a binary which he himself is keen to problematise. As Kidd argues, Scott had a confused role: identifying himself as Saxon while also bringing Highlandism to the Lowlands and projecting Highlandism as Scotland's national image (p. 56). He tries to establish a distinct Scottish sphere while simultaneously replaying the Teuton-Celt dynamic that was compromising it.

Tom Devine explains this confusion in the broader context of Lowland Scots who tended to absorb tropes of Highland culture:

The adoption of Highland emblems, costumes and associations as its national image by a modernizing Scotland in the nineteenth century is curious but not entirely incomprehensible. Scottish society was in a contradictory position within the union relationship with England. On the one hand, the nation's rise to prosperity depended on the new connection with her southern neighbour but, on the other, the political and material superiority of England threatened the full-scale assimilation of Scotland. At the same time, from the later eighteenth century romantic nationalism spread throughout Europe and it was unlikely that Scotland would remain isolated from this cultural and political revolution. Any vigorous assertion of national identity would, however, threaten the English relationship on which material progress was seen to depend and so Highlandism answered the notional need for maintenance of a distinctive Scottish identity without in any way compromising the union.<sup>110</sup>

For Devine, while Highlandism differentiated Scotland, it also provided a means for the Scottish nation to remain rooted in the Union. Rural and Highland Scotland could provide the image of a distinct national culture while the increasingly populous Lowland culture, and its increasingly confident Saxon ethnicity, allowed Scottish culture to incorporate into Britain.

The application of the Enlightenment dynamic widely led to this contradictory state in Scotland; however, by the Victorian period, there is evidence to suggest that a culture developed in Scotland where many Scots started to privilege their shared Saxon ethnicity over their Scottish nationality. Many identified more with those in England than 'their own countrymen north of the Forth', as the land reformer John

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<sup>110</sup> T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: A Modern History* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 244.

Murdoch noted.<sup>111</sup> Thomas Carlyle identified with Saxonism and was particularly hostile to Celtic identities, namely through ridiculing the newly incorporated Irish, referring to them as 'sanspotatoe' and 'ultra-savage', while distinguishing himself as English.<sup>112</sup> Robert Knox was also keen to identify Britain as 'England' and discuss how best to 'dispose' of the Celts.<sup>113</sup> The Enlightenment dynamic, when fused with the emerging racist conceptions of nations and the nascent hostility felt towards the Gàidhealtachd post-1745, at times led to a great degree of Lowland contempt for the Highlanders, further splitting the two territories.

This displaced self-contempt was not simply a position held amongst the Scottish intelligentsia; much of the Scottish media was intent on marginalising the Highlands further and identifying with Saxonism. In her doctoral thesis 'Contempt, Sympathy and Romance: Lowland perceptions of the Highlands and the clearances during the Famine years, 1845-1855', Krisztina Fenyô exposes the harsh (indeed, racist) portrayal of the Highlander throughout the Lowland Scots press. As in Ireland, the famine and clearances could be blamed, not on unfair and dysfunctional land policy or landlordism, but on the racial indolence of the Celtic inhabitants, who were incapable of adapting to 'Anglo-Saxon' culture. It was argued in *The Scotsman* that 'it is a fact that morally and intellectually they [the Celtic Highlanders] are an inferior race to the Lowland Saxon – and that before they can in a civilised age be put in a condition to provide for themselves and not to be throwing themselves on the charity of the hard-working Lowlander, the race must be improved by a Lowland intermixture'.<sup>114</sup> Such expressions of hereditarianism and selection, reflecting the views of Knox, reveal how divided the Scottish nation was in the mid-Victorian era. Many Lowlanders celebrated the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon at this time, something which would be strongly challenged later in the century: the *Fifeshire*

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<sup>111</sup> Kidd, 'Teutonist Ethnology', p. 67.

<sup>112</sup> (cited in) Young, pp. 28-30.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>114</sup> 'Inquiry – Into the Distress in the Highlands and Islands', *The Scotsman*, 3 February 1847, p. 3.

*Journal*, for instance, celebrated 'the higher capabilities of the Anglo-Saxon'.<sup>115</sup> The cultural divide between the territories was not only strong but widely regarded, it was a common view for a time that the only way to solve Celtic 'indolence' was to remove them altogether. Many Lowland Scots were on the side of the sheep rather than their fellow nationals.

The extent of this divide is reflected in the few but striking comments which reveal that both the Highlanders and the Lowlanders were imagining themselves as having different nationalities and even referring to the two territories as different nations. As Fenyô summarises, it was believed by some in the Lowlands that charity 'no more belonged to the Highlanders than to "the Hill Collies", or the subjects of "Queen Pomare", in other words Scottish Gaels were just as alien, or foreign a people to the Scottish Lowlanders as some Asian or other far away, and presumably inferior, people'.<sup>116</sup> Sir Charles Trevelyan, of the Highland and Island Emigration Society, also stated that Germans were 'less foreign to us than the Irish or Scotch Celt'.<sup>117</sup> Fenyô qualifies that such expressions were extreme and that charity schemes were later organised by the likes of Donald Ross for the Highlanders, but identity hostility was certainly apparent.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, it was not simply a case of the Lowlanders marginalising the Highlanders through this rhetoric but, in turn, the Highlanders could imagine themselves as a different nation. The Highland Society, for instance, sought to 'preserve the nationality of the Highlands'<sup>119</sup> and its national traditions. There were also suggestions that these tensions could have political repercussions, with proposals for the Highlands to revolt, presumably from the 'Anglo-Saxon' territories of Lowland Scotland and the rest of Britain. The *Inverness Courier* reported: 'One man said before they would be turned out, they would do as the Hungarians did with the

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<sup>115</sup> (cited in) Krisztina Fenyô, "'Contempt, Sympathy and Romance": Lowland Perceptions of the Highlands and the Clearances during the Famine years, 1845-1855' [unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 1996], pp. 85-86.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>117</sup> (cited in) T. M. Devine, *The Great Highland Famine: hunger, emigration, and the Scottish Highlands in the nineteenth century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), p. 251.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>119</sup> 'The Highland Society', *The Scotsman*, 27 March 1847, p. 2.

Austrians',<sup>120</sup> a reference to the recent Hungarian Revolution. Interestingly, later in the nineteenth century, Scots would look to the Kingdom of Hungary to provide models for Home Rule arrangements.<sup>121</sup> For some, the great degree of cultural and ethnic pluralism within mid-Victorian Scotland meant that a unified national image was slipping away.

Scotland's national confidence was also threatened by increased centralisation in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Following the loss of the Secretary of State for Scotland in 1746 and its replacement, the Lord Advocate, in 1827, there was little political mechanism to consider Scottish policy or the application of UK policy on Scotland in Westminster. There were also unpopular, specific affairs which suggested increasing centralisation. Peel's Banking Act of 1845 was believed to have disconnected the Scottish banking sector and involved restrictions 'imposed on the free rights of banking and currency previously enjoyed in Scotland for nearly two hundred years'.<sup>122</sup> This was coupled with the acknowledgment that Scotland's affairs were often delayed or scuppered in the House of Lords, as was retrospectively summarised in 1886: 'what Scotsmen have to complain most of is that on vital questions of policy she has obtained no hearing. Scotland waited thirty years for the extension of the Franchise and about half-a-century for the abolition of the hypothec'.<sup>123</sup> Many in the Church of Scotland acknowledged state 'encroachment' into its affairs which led to the Disruption in 1843, with those in pursuit of spiritual independence forming the Free Church of Scotland. Furthermore, throughout the UK, the Poor Laws were deemed to be part of a "centralizing" process',<sup>124</sup> while the Industrial Revolution further integrated the two nations economically.<sup>125</sup> Such centralisation was not particular to the UK but occurred across Europe: Eric Hobsbawm has demonstrated that c.1830-1880, with increased standardisation in states generated through print capitalism and required for trade, the ideas of the nation and

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<sup>120</sup> 'Disturbances in North Uist', reprinted in *Glasgow Herald*, 30 July 1849, p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> 'Home Rule for Scotland', *The Scottish Review*, 8 (July 1886), 1-20 (p. 11).

<sup>122</sup> B. D. Mackenzie, 'Home Rule for Scotland', *Westminster Review*, 132 (1889), 553-565 (p. 558).

<sup>123</sup> 'Home Rule for Scotland', *The Scottish Review*, p. 5.

<sup>124</sup> Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 30.

<sup>125</sup> Sir Reginald Coupland, *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism: A Study* (London: Collins, 1954), p. 247.



the state became increasingly synonymous, where they had previously maintained some degree of hermeneutic independence.<sup>126</sup> Governance was increasingly shifting from civil society and religion to parliament.<sup>127</sup> For those who wanted to maintain Scottish nationhood and nationality against assimilation to a British nation-state, steps would have to be taken.

### 1.3 Resisting Assimilation

As a consequence of this increasing assimilation and division, the 1850s saw the building of a resistance through attempts to stimulate national feeling in Scotland. In 1853, the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights was established, with an initial meeting 'crowded to excess, many hundreds besides having failed to obtain admission'.<sup>128</sup> The association proposed that "'the office for Secretary of State for Scotland be restored'"<sup>129</sup> and there be increased parliamentary representation in Westminster.<sup>130</sup> Michael Keating has argued that it was a form of 'proto-nationalism' but 'firmly within the unionist tradition, asking for more consideration for Scottish issues at Westminster and in Whitehall'.<sup>131</sup> However, Keating overlooks the fact that the Association's goals were far from short term: some imagined a progressive shift of power away from Westminster so that Scotland would have more national autonomy, with the Union being reduced to an imperial parliament simply for controlling affairs of empire (a vision Gladstone would later pursue).<sup>132</sup> Mr Dove, of the National Association, argued that the establishment of a Secretary of State and increased representation in Westminster would 'do much; but they will not do all' and that the 'full remedy' would be a 'parliament'.<sup>133</sup> The stepping stone to achieving this end was

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<sup>126</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 22-23.

<sup>127</sup> Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 148.

<sup>128</sup> 'Justice to Scotland', *Examiner*, 2388 (1853), 712.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> 'The Union with England and Scottish Nationality', *The North British Review*, 21 (1854), 69-100 (p. 96).

<sup>131</sup> Michael Keating, *The Independence of Scotland: Self-Government and the Shifting Politics of Union* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 42.

<sup>132</sup> 'The Union with England and Scottish Nationality', p. 98.

<sup>133</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*

to demand more representation and a Secretary of State for Scotland in the 1850s. It is perhaps no coincidence that almost immediately following the reestablishment of the Secretaryship and the Scotland Office (1885), the Scottish Home Rule Association (1886) was established, demanding a parliament and the Imperial Federation initially hinted at by the National Association. There was a degree of gradualism to Scottish political nationalism in the nineteenth century.

To resist British assimilation, Scotland would have to reunify itself by developing a common sense of nationality and casting off the divided ethnicity which undermined it. Perhaps the clearest embodiment of Scotland's attempt to resist assimilation is the Wallace Monument on the Abbey Craig in Stirling (the 'gateway to the Highlands'), which the Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights supported.<sup>134</sup> The stress placed on uniting the nation is revealed in the commentaries on the meetings to arrange the funding, design and geography of the monument. *The Glasgow Herald* reported on a meeting and quoted the following declaration by the Earl of Elgin who led the committee:

The proposal to rear a National Monument to Sir William Wallace, this patriot hero of Scotland, must commend itself to the feelings of every Scottish heart. Movements for the carrying out of such an enterprise have previously been attempted, but have failed, owing, it is supposed to the want of combined effort, and differences of opinion respecting an appropriate site. The originators of the present movement have resolved to obviate these difficulties by a general appeal to the whole country, and by definitely fixing the site on the Abbey Craig, near Stirling, overlooking the battlefield of Stirling, the theatre of the hero's greatest victory and which was followed by his recognition as Guardian of the Kingdom.<sup>135</sup>

It is noteworthy here that national consensus was desired above all, and celebrating both Wallace and Stirling was believed to be the best means of bringing this about. Geographically, Stirling united Highlander and Lowlander: 'the ancient castle has held and assailed [...] and defied the ravages of time and war, linking the memories of a hundred generations, as the rock on which it stands links the two halves of Scotland,

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<sup>134</sup> H. J. Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 77.

<sup>135</sup> 'The Wallace Monument', *Glasgow Herald*, 13 June 1856, p. 4.

and forms a place of strength in that narrow neck of the union'.<sup>136</sup> By choosing this locale, which linked both parties in the Scottish 'union', the Highlands and Lowlands, and choosing the national hero, the committee could hope to reconcile the nation and stimulate the 'combined effort' that was felt to be lacking in Scottish national life. It was a means to 'preserve in Scotland something of a separate national existence',<sup>137</sup> acknowledging common membership of an 'historic state', as Hobsbawm defines it,<sup>138</sup> which could circumvent the issue of divided Scottish ethnicity. A national feeling was certainly being actively encouraged and attempts were being made to heal the fraught 'union' between Highlander and Lowlander.



Figure 1.1: Joseph Noel Paton, *Lion and Typhon* design sketch, 1859 (© The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum. Licensors [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk))

Such resistance is particularly evident in the original accepted design for the Wallace Monument: Noel Paton's galvanised iron piece, *Lion and Typhon* (Figure 1.1). In this period, Noel Paton's heroic monuments were clearly sought after: he also designed a 'Memorial of the War of Independence under Wallace and Bruce' for

<sup>136</sup> 'The Wallace Monument', *The Aberdeen Journal*, 25 June 1856, p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> 'The Wallace Monument', *The London Reader*, 130 (1865), 4.

<sup>138</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 75.

Edinburgh in 1859, but it was never executed.<sup>139</sup> His Wallace Monument is an allegory of Wallace (and indeed Scotland, the nation's heraldry being the lion rampant) overcoming the deadly monster representative of tyranny. Unsurprisingly, objections were raised that it stirred too great an anti-English feeling, although it was later admired by Noel Paton's fellow Pre-Raphaelites Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.<sup>140</sup> Despite its eventual rejection, the design's initial consideration suggests that the monument project was not simply to create a symbolic representation of Scotland's romantic past but to perform an expression of cultural resistance, asserting Scotland's nationhood in defiance of assimilation. This was not a case of national nostalgia, where a people accept their status as a lesser part of a state,<sup>141</sup> but was a form of opposition, affirming Scotland's civic society and claims to nationality. The plan also shows that it is too simplistic to state that the Wallace monument project was part of an enthusiastic unionist culture that celebrated the equal partnership between Scotland and England, as Devine has recently argued,<sup>142</sup> given the fraught partnership represented here.

When the foundation stone of the Wallace Monument was laid in 1861, John Stuart Blackie delivered a speech on 'Scottish Literature': 'a trumpet-blast of warning to his nation and defiance to its enemies'.<sup>143</sup> Blackie would become a strong advocate of Scottish culture and language, rejecting the idea that it was 'vulgar' to sing Scottish songs; he said: 'I'll tell you what is vulgar: to pretend to be what you are not'.<sup>144</sup> Blackie's statement is contemporaneous with Neil N Maclean who sets up a scenario in *Life in a Northern University* (1874) where two characters – Lockhart and Fender – discuss Scottish songs. Lockhart asks 'What should we do if we lost them?' and Fender replies 'Why, we should die':<sup>145</sup> songs are believed to occupy the core of national culture. Blackie supported 'native' forms and resisted 'every pretty French

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<sup>139</sup> Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 181.

<sup>140</sup> George R. Halkett, 'Sir Joseph Noel Paton, RSA', *Magazine of Art*, 3 (1880), 1-6 (p. 3).

<sup>141</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 41.

<sup>142</sup> T. M. Devine, 'The "Death" and the Reinvention of Scotland', lecture delivered at St Edmund Hall, Oxford (20 June 2013).

<sup>143</sup> Howard Angus Kennedy, *Professor Blackie, his sayings and doings: A Biographical Sketch* (London: J. Clarke & Co., 1895), p. 207.

<sup>144</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>145</sup> Neil N Maclean, *Life at a Northern University* (Aberdeen: The Rosemount Press, 1906), p. 133.

conceit or whiff of Metropolitan sentiment that may be blown across the Border'.<sup>146</sup> Like the Wallace Monument, Blackie stood out against the creation of a 'Northern province of England called Scotland'.<sup>147</sup> Blackie's views were representative of a steady movement away from Scottish nationalism paying homage to the Union and instead establishing itself in opposition to England, also reflected in Ellen Johnston's poem 'Mourning for Garibaldi': 'Know'st thou that Scotland's a nation true-hearted, / She ne'er shall be mocked by England's gay fools'.<sup>148</sup> Later in the century, Charles Waddie's poem 'Is Scotland to Get Home Rule?' similarly styles Scotland against the 'English knave' (l. 22) and presents Scotland's voice, from the Highland glen to the Lowland 'workshop, mart, or street' (l. 37), as united.<sup>149</sup> As Graeme Morton notes, it had become harder to represent Scotland and Britain as one, 'unionist-nationalism had died out in the 1860s, to be replaced by an identity that was "more Scottish than British"',<sup>150</sup> an identity that no longer understood the Union as Acts that preserved and respected Scottish nationality without obstructions. Johnston's comparison of Garibaldi to Wallace is significant: like Italy, Scotland was becoming re-unified.

These expressions of resistance also developed in the Highlands too, through the emergence of the Land Leagues to reject landlordism and support the rights of the crofters, which Blackie supported. These included the Scottish Land Restoration League, the Highland Land Restoration Association, and the Highland Land League.<sup>151</sup> They had political force: the Crofter's Party in Scotland, which was associated with the Land Leagues, returned 4 MPs and a further ally to Westminster in the 1885 general election, which led to the Crofter's Act (1886). In part, these groups were made possible by the Disruption of 1843 as the Free Kirk had 'strong antipathy' to Landlordism and included a very large Gaelic-speaking demographic; almost all Gaelic-

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<sup>146</sup> (cited in) Kennedy, *Professor Blackie*, p. 211.

<sup>147</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> Ellen Johnston, *Autobiography, Poems and Songs* (Glasgow: William Love, 1867), p. 30.

<sup>149</sup> Charles Waddie, *Scotia's Darling Seat: A Home Rule Sermon, and other poems* (Edinburgh: Waddie & Co., 1890), pp. 16-18.

<sup>150</sup> Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, p. 188.

<sup>151</sup> For a detailed discussion on the Scottish Land Leagues and their relationship to Ireland's, see Andrew Newby, *Ireland, Radicalism and the Scottish Highlands, c. 1870-1912* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

speakers had defected to the Free Kirk.<sup>152</sup> The Free Kirk became an important vehicle to support and organise the Highlanders; many of those associated in forming the Free Kirk during the Disruption had also been involved in the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights.<sup>153</sup>

Political unrest in Ireland also helped generate a more confident resistance to ineffective management of Highland affairs. In 'The Gaelic Connection: The Highlands, Ireland and Nationalism, 1873-1922', James Hunter has outlined how the Irish and the Scottish Land League movements came into contact.<sup>154</sup> He argues that the Scottish movement did not simply mimic the Irish developments but that many of them began in Scotland, noting that 'the link between Gaelic revivalism and nationalism [...] is evident in Scotland much earlier than in Ireland', citing the Gaelic Society of Inverness (1871) – which was not simply cultural but vindicated 'the rights and character of the Gaelic people'.<sup>155</sup> Hunter also notes that Douglas Hyde was influenced by the Gaelic Revival in Scotland which was, he said, 'much healthier and more vigorous' than in Ireland.<sup>156</sup> Although the Scottish and Irish Land Leagues had different aims, the movements worked together to achieve their ends. Similarly, E. W. McFarland has argued that Scotland was a key site for developing the Irish Home Rule cause, despite the evident tension over Irish issues in Scotland.<sup>157</sup> This fact is embodied by the 30,000 strong crowd who received Parnell in Edinburgh in 1889 when he was presented the freedom of the city in a silver casket designed with a thistle and a shamrock, leading the *Scotsman* to warn of separatist design: 'they have severed the union of the flowers'.<sup>158</sup>

Indeed many Lowlanders became sympathetic to the Land Reform cause in Scotland, especially around the time of the Napier Commission (1883-1884). Several

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<sup>152</sup> Ian Bradley, "'Having and Holding': The Highland Land War of the 1880s", *History Today*, 37.12 (1987), 23-28 (p. 26).

<sup>153</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 93-94.

<sup>154</sup> James Hunter, 'The Gaelic Connection: The Highlands, Ireland and Nationalism, 1873-1922', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 54 (1975), 178-204.

<sup>155</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>156</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>157</sup> E. W. McFarland, *John Ferguson 1836-1906: Irish Issues in Scottish Politics* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2003); Donald M. MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 146.

<sup>158</sup> 'The Court', *The Scotsman*, 18 July 1889, p. 4.

started to realise that the problems in the Highlands were not generated by the Highlanders themselves but by 'the premature application of advanced commercial law'.<sup>159</sup> Clive Dewey has argued that ancient literature, through Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, was used to prove the pre-existence of an alternative social model in the Highlands and that tenant rights were key to it (p. 43). Using John Stuart Blackie as an example, Dewey argues that this primitive communism appealed to the "'thinking Scotsmen'" of the age: 'The "democratic intellect" [...] was peculiarly susceptible to the suggestion that advanced industrial societies, characterized by the self-maximizing economic individualism, were ethically inferior to earlier, more communal, forms of social organization' (p. 54). Although Dewey argues that this pursuit of an alternative society was not entirely successful (p. 68), it did demonstrate that many Scots (importantly, Lowland, professional Scots like Blackie) were turning to Celtic history and, in doing so, were using it to further their own collective identity and national rights. Blackie also successfully revived the study of Celtic and Gaelic culture in Edinburgh and almost single-handedly established the first Celtic chair in a Scottish university in 1882.<sup>160</sup> Cultural unity and respect for the Highlands were starting to be restored; for some, to marginalise the Highlander became 'disgraceful to the national character'.<sup>161</sup>

This (re)identification with Highland society and Ireland spurred the critique of Westminster and generated a Scottish Home Rule movement. Blackie (who held Napier in high regard) went on to write his own book about the Crofters and the Land question, *The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws* (1885). In the book, he conflates the Land and centralisation issues, believing that the Highlanders are the victim of a society where 'uniformity is the law, mechanism the method, and

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<sup>159</sup> Clive Dewey, 'Celtic Agrarian Legislation and the Celtic Revival: Historicist Implications of Gladstone's Irish and Scottish Land Acts 1870-1886', *Past and Present*, 64.1 (1974), 30-70 (p. 41) [future references to this issue are included in brackets after the quotation].

<sup>160</sup> Stuart Wallace, *John Stuart Blackie: Scottish Scholar and Patriot* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 272.

<sup>161</sup> John Stuart Blackie, 'The Highland Crofters', *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, 13 (1883), pp. 604-616 (p. 607).

monotony the product'.<sup>162</sup> Blackie's book is also important for reversing the stadialism model. He states that the Highlander was not 'semi savage' and instead turns the critique on 'Saxon civilization' and the 'barbarity of the policy of desolation',<sup>163</sup> much like Decadent critiques of 'civilisation' and 'progress'. The language of the Enlightenment is flipped: it is the more commercial culture that exhibits 'barbarity'. Furthermore, he complicates the Highland-Lowland binary by arguing that the Highlanders are not purely Celtic but 'Celto-Scandinavian' and he critiques the English for their tendency 'to depreciate the Scot' and, in turn, critiques the Scots for 'look[ing] down upon the Celt'.<sup>164</sup> He is loath to place the Scots in the Saxon or English camp and tries to upset an easy binary between Lowland and Highland and bring the two together.

As a product of these events, by the late 1880s Blackie became increasingly interested in Scottish Home Rule and became the Chairman of the Scottish Home Rule Association, formed in 1886. He believed that the Scots had 'fallen victims to the Anglican taint' and believed that some form of political action would have to be taken: 'a distinct nationality, nobly and manfully acquired, should be preserved'.<sup>165</sup> The form of Home Rule Blackie, and other Home Rulers, proposed could be strikingly critical of the Union: 'A Union in the proper sense of the word it was not; for a Union implies the separate existence of two bodies acting together in fair partnership; in any other sense it becomes not a Union or partnership, but an incorporation or "total absorption" of the smaller body into the larger'.<sup>166</sup> His language was unreservedly antagonistic to the 'multitudinous babblement and insolent centralization' of the British Parliament.<sup>167</sup> He effectively sought a new Union, under the following terms: 'The Scottish Parliament, with independent legislative action and a dependent executive should be restored, with full powers in all purely Scottish matters, all Imperial legislation being carefully

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<sup>162</sup> John Stuart Blackie, *The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws: Historico-Economical Enquiry* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885), p. 93.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>165</sup> John Stuart Blackie, *The Union of 1707 and Its Results: A Plea for Scottish Home Rule* (Glasgow: Morison Brothers, 1892), p. 2.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>167</sup> (cited in) Kennedy, *Professor Blackie*, p. 216.



excluded as belonging to the essential nature of a fair and honourable Union'.<sup>168</sup> This Union is conceived of as a purely imperial construct to manage the Empire.

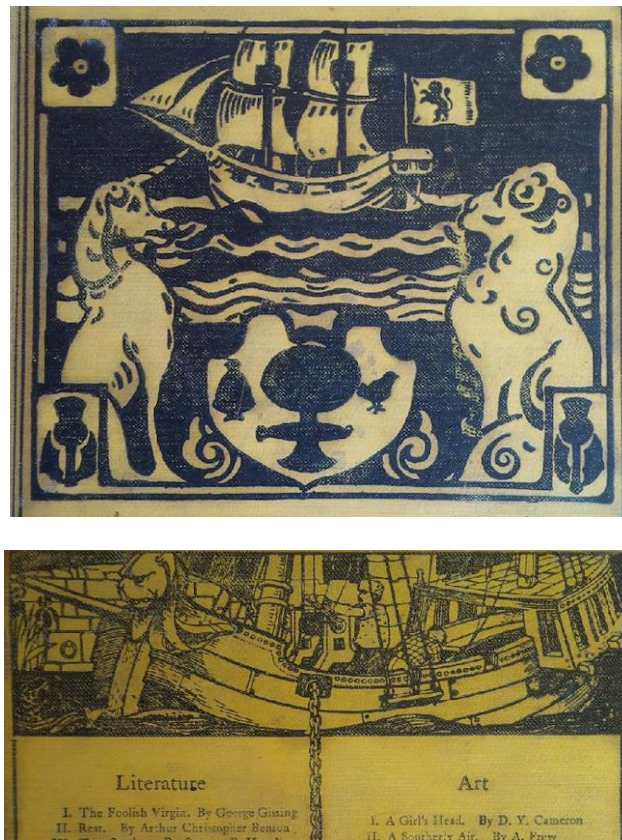


Figure 1.2: Details from the front and back covers of *The Yellow Book* (1896)

Incidentally, this desire for a partnership that respected Scotland's autonomy is very clearly reflected in D. Y. Cameron's illustrations for the front cover and spine of the eighth issue of *The Yellow Book* (January 1896). By this point, *The Yellow Book*, one of the main platforms for Decadent culture, was trying to distance itself from London following the scandal of the Wilde trial and looked further afield for contributions; indeed, all of the visual art contributed to the eighth issue was from the Glasgow School. For the cover design (Figure 1.2), Cameron not only includes Glasgow's heraldry (the tree, bird, fish and bell) but also a thistle on the spine. The unicorn and the lion also appear with the unicorn on the left: the Scottish styling of Union heraldry. The most telling feature of the cover is the boat in the background

<sup>168</sup> Blackie, *The Union of 1707*, p. 14.

which has a lion rampant flying at its stern. This feature appears to be a visual riposte to the standardised back cover design of *The Yellow Book* from the sixth issue onwards, which presents a very similar ship with an English bulldog decorating the bow but it does not show the stern. By imagining the stern of the ship with a Scottish flag, Cameron not only reclaimed Scotland's position as an equal partner in Union but also visually wrote Scotland into British Decadent culture.

Although concessions had been made to Scotland, most significantly the restoration of the Scotland Office, if anything, they cemented the national voice and desire for change. If Scotland was a political entity, as the Secretaryship confirmed, then many 'Scottish' issues were believed to be on the back-burner in Westminster: 'the Church question, the licensing question, the land question, the game question, the question of university reform and education generally, and various questions dealing with commerce, poor law and legal procedure'.<sup>169</sup> There was also a feeling that, if Ireland was to achieve Home Rule, Scotland could be at a democratic disadvantage thus 'Home Rule all Round' may be necessary (something Gladstone was attuned to). However, the Scottish movement should not be read simply as an afterthought to Irish Home Rule; indeed, Blackie believed that Home Rule should be granted to the 'sober-minded sensible nation' first.<sup>170</sup>

In the historical criticism that exists on the Scottish Home Rule Movement, scholars have been sceptical in their assessment of its impact.<sup>171</sup> Even in its own day, it was dismissed as a 'parrot cry, adopted from the storehouse of national discontent'.<sup>172</sup> However, such claims overlook the longevity and progress of the movement; as Sir Reginald Coupland, whose *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism* (1954) remains the best history of Scottish politics in the period, argues: 'if Scottish nationalism [...] had had no native roots, if it had been only a pale reflection of Irish nationalism, it would probably have faded away in the course of that bleak

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<sup>169</sup> 'Home Rule for Scotland', *The Scottish Review*, p. 5.

<sup>170</sup> (cited in) Kennedy, *Professor Blackie*, p. 213.

<sup>171</sup> Hanham, pp. 91-118; Colin Kidd, *Unionism and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 268-284; James Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government* (London: Polygon, 1992), pp. 69-73.

<sup>172</sup> 'Scottish Home Rule – A Retrospect', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 147 (1890), 451-467 (p. 451).

Conservative decade [1895-1906]'.<sup>173</sup> Following Gladstone's promise of 'Home Rule all Round' and the consequent formation of the Liberal Unionist party in 1886, the pro-Home Rule Liberal vote did not crash in Scotland as it did in England. In the 1885 general election, following the extension of the franchise, Scotland returned 61 Liberals to 10 Tories, while the parties were nearly equal in England. In 1886, although the Liberal majority was certainly reduced in Scotland, it maintained a clear majority and the Liberals returned nearly double the number of seats as the defected Liberal Unionists, with 45 seats over 23. The Scottish Home Rule movement certainly went through its peaks and troughs between 1886 and 1914 but the issue did not subside: Scottish Home Rule motions were carried in the House of Commons from 1893 onwards, leading to two bills which were carried by significant majorities on first readings in the House of Commons (in 1908 and 1911) and one that passed its second reading (1913). Had it not been for the First World War, the counterproductive Federalism bills and developments in Ireland, this mere 'parrot cry' could very well have become constitutionally binding.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the rise of national feeling in Scotland was the establishment of numerous Scottish national societies and bodies in the period. By strengthening Scotland's civic society, a greater sense of self-government and national feeling was generated. Some of the various national bodies and societies established in the period include: Scottish Text Society (1882), Royal Scottish Geographical Society (1884), Scottish History Society (1886), Scottish Socialist Federation (1888), Scottish Labour Party (1888), Scottish Mountaineering Club (1889), Scottish Football League (1890), Royal Scottish National Orchestra (1891), Scottish National Portrait Gallery (1891), Society of Scottish Artists (1891), and Scottish Trades Union Congress (1897). In universities, Scottish Literature also became recognised as an academic discipline in this period: in 1897, the University of St Andrews changed its syllabus wording from 'English Literature' to 'English and Scottish Literature', perhaps a legacy from Principal John Campbell Shairp who did much work

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<sup>173</sup> Coupland, *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism*, p. 303.

on Scottish literature in the preceding decades.<sup>174</sup> Complementing this, there were numerous histories of Scotland published in this period.<sup>175</sup> Around the 1890s, Scotland was trying to reclaim a sense of nationality through its institutions. Scotland was beginning to cast off the ethnic binaries that were inhibiting its nationality and managed to successfully form a stronger civic identity.

A further important inheritance of the developing revival of Scottish identity was the birth of the Unionist Party (a fusion of the Scottish Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists) which was a very successful political force between 1912 and 1965. The party offered a Scottish variant of centre-right, imperial politics, although it was not exclusively opposed to self-government for the dominions and colonies. The party opened up another space for national thinking and feeling.<sup>176</sup> John Buchan, who is explored later in this chapter, was an MP for the party and the tensions between nationalism and British imperialism are clearly manifest in his novels. The strains of nationalism in the party were so strong that many members later defected to form the Scottish Party which, following a merger with the National Party, would form the Scottish National Party.

Given this emerging Scottish movement in culture, society and politics, it is clear why Geddes celebrates Blackie in 'The Scots Renaissance'. Thanks to Blackie and the various movements he was in some way related to or surrounded him, Scotland managed to develop a far stronger platform to develop cultural nationalism. It is essential that research acknowledges this historical context when considering *fin-de-siècle* Scotland for not only do many of the writers and artists in the period continue these cultural and social developments which were beginning to blossom but Geddes and others also appear to have been supportive of the political developments in Scotland too, albeit from a politically sceptical distance. In a letter to a Mr Campbell, where he declines membership to the Scottish Home Rule Association, he admits his 'total dissent from contemporary political methods' but adds: 'I believe I can do my

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<sup>174</sup> Andrew Nash, *Kailyard and Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 21; Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p. 5.

<sup>175</sup> Nash, pp. 20-21.

<sup>176</sup> Kidd, *Union and Unionisms*, pp. 18-19.

best service to the cause by working at the realities of the Scots Renaissance'.<sup>177</sup> He also complained of the 'down-draught of London and its robbery of our resources' as well as the 'doles' Westminster returned,<sup>178</sup> replaying the same grievances Blackie voiced. He also styled his Outlook Tower as means 'to recreate an active centre and so arrest the tremendous centralising power of the metropolis of London', in the words of Elizabeth Sharp.<sup>179</sup> It is clear that this socio-political context tentatively underpinned and informed Geddes's various activities, a context which is all-too-often neglected. In order to assess the work of Geddes and others, this context must be observed.

#### **1.4 The Late-Victorian Romance Revival**

Scottish literature in the period strongly reflected some of the concerns felt over the position of Scotland. The late-Victorian Romance Revival in particular supported developing attempts to critique narratives of 'progress' and distinguish Scotland's national identity. Although this half of the chapter will focus on Stevenson – who held an important place for Geddes and whose work I will argue had affinities to Decadence – the use of the Romance genre was not limited to Stevenson: these discussions have wider implications for Scottish literature in the late-Victorian period so several others will be discussed. I demonstrate that the Romance genre in the late-Victorian period – which often represented imperial and inter-cultural power dynamics – lent itself well to furthering the reunification of Scotland and that many Scots used the genre to recover the images of Scotland and the Celt from marginalisation. Stevenson will be examined in detail first, followed by a discussion of the pertinent works produced by Conan Doyle, Cunninghame Graham, Lang, Barrie, and Buchan to show how the Scottish question so greatly shaped the genre in Scotland and how the genre in turn

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<sup>177</sup> Letter from Patrick Geddes to Mr Campbell, 1 November 1895 [National Library of Scotland: MS 10508A].

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*; Amelia Defries, *The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and his Gospel* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1928), p. 221.

<sup>179</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), p. 249.

furthered ideas that were operating in the socio-political realm and laying the grounds of the Scots Renaissance in numerous ways.

Several of the features of the late-Victorian Romance Revival made it a particularly suitable genre for supporting certain forms of cultural nationalism. It was an international phenomenon, one that took many forms but tended to encompass literature that had a focus on adventure, quest, a clear plot line and flatter characterisation than Realism; although, as Anna Vaninskaya states, attempting to define it is an 'ultimately futile exercise'.<sup>180</sup> The term, in its broadest sense, is most helpfully understood in the dialogic relationship it was frequently discussed in during the nineteenth century: Realism and Romance. Romance was less a clearly defined concept in its own right and more a word used to critique English Realism and French Naturalism, in a number of forms, and offer an alternative to it. This dialectic is invoked in Ouida's essay 'Romance and Realism' (1883), where she critiques Realism: 'the *éternellement vrai* is as real as the *infinement petit* [...] what I object to is the limitation of realism in fiction to what is commonplace, tedious, and bald – to the habit in a word of insisting that the potato is real and that the passion-flower is not'.<sup>181</sup> Ouida questions the notion that Romance is a lesser genre because it is not real; for her, it simply displays a different type of reality.

There is a spatial, even national, dimension to the Romance-Realism dialectic. Ouida argues that Romances tend to move beyond the known into unknown territories, often outside of Britain; although, as will be seen, this is not always the case with Scotland where different cultures and threats are often found within. She writes, when comparing Romance to Realism, that the Genoese lover 'is every whit as "real" as the British prig [...] or the British philistine'.<sup>182</sup> H Rider Haggard shares these views, complaining of the 'accursed' Naturalistic school in 'About Fiction' (1887).<sup>183</sup> He sees Romance as a genre which facilitates representing the exceptional and magnificent, but also furnishes means to break people out of English conventionalism: 'English life

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<sup>180</sup> Anna Vaninskaya, 'The Late-Victorian Romance Revival: A Generic Excursus', *English Literature in Transition*, 51 (2008), 57-79 (pp. 57).

<sup>181</sup> Ouida, *Frescoes* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1895), p. 306.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>183</sup> H Rider Haggard, 'About Fiction', *The Contemporary Review*, 51 (1887), 172-180 (p. 176).

is surrounded by conventionalism, and English fiction has come to reflect the conventionalism, not the life'.<sup>184</sup> Romance is portrayed as an escape from English, or British, culture. For Haggard, Romance is a way of encountering the other, a form of imperial anthropology where a writer has 'the right of dealing with bigamy',<sup>185</sup> although he ignores the fact that these ideas were treated in novels of other genres, such as *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862). He also believes it is a means to bridge the gap between the civilised and the barbarian, a genre that appeals broadly.<sup>186</sup> Andrew Lang went one further here: he believed Romance appealed to the 'ancestral barbarism of our natures';<sup>187</sup> in this respect, it had affinities with Decadent critiques of 'civilisation'. Lang does not find as much difference between Realism and Romance as Haggard or Ouida do; he suggests that the tension between the two reflects the late-Victorian tension between civilisation and barbarity and the Victorians' inability to confront the fact that they were both: 'we can enjoy all sorts of things', Realism and Romance, he writes.<sup>188</sup>

Romance was also distinguished from Realism in terms of gender: Elaine Showalter argues that Romance was a male response to the female hegemony of the three-volume novel.<sup>189</sup> This is certainly evident in the typical characterisation of Stevenson's novels as 'boys' books',<sup>190</sup> and with the men in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) traversing the mountains, which are named after Sheba's breasts –<sup>191</sup> a sequence which is discussed in detail in Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather*.<sup>192</sup> However, the argument does not entirely stand up: *Catriona* (1893), for instance, is designed for male and female readers, evident in the final chapter which is addressed to a boy and girl,<sup>193</sup> while Marie Corelli was a hugely successful Romance novelist in

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>187</sup> Andrew Lang, 'Realism and Romance', *The Contemporary Review*, 52 (1887), 683-693 (p. 689).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 690.

<sup>189</sup> Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 2001), p. pp. 76-77.

<sup>190</sup> Lang, 'Realism and Romance', p. 690.

<sup>191</sup> H Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 22.

<sup>192</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-4.

<sup>193</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Catriona* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995), p. 269 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

the late nineteenth century. However, there is certainly a bias towards male characters and a male audience in most Romance fiction, resisting 'unmanly' Naturalism.<sup>194</sup>

It has been demonstrated that such Romances could directly engage with the issue of nationalism; Daly argues, with regards to Stoker's *The Snake's Pass* (1890), that Romance 'possessed considerable importance for the cultural nationalist project'.<sup>195</sup> As Cairns Craig argues, Romance often occurs when there is a refusal to 'submit to historical amelioration'.<sup>196</sup> However, critics have not yet considered this refusal in a late-Victorian Scottish context, despite the large number of Scottish Romances produced in the period and the fact that the revival of the genre ran almost exactly alongside the Scottish *fin-de-siècle* movement, between the 1880s and 1910s. Even a cursory consideration of the above features demonstrates that *fin-de-siècle* Romance could play well into the rising Scottish movement: it could challenge the civilisation-barbarity binary, it could revive a sense of manliness (which was key to Blackie's ideas of Scottish nationalism), it often involved encountering and defining national identity abroad ('confronting spectres of *themselves*'),<sup>197</sup> and resisting conventionalism and the status quo. It could also be a means of resisting 'English' cultural traditions as Realism was frequently encoded as a problem in English literature, by Romancers such as Haggard and Stevenson, despite its common associations with French Naturalism. In several Scottish late-Victorian Romances, all of these features are markedly present and responded to and worked within a larger movement in Scotland. To undertake this analysis, a specific type of Romance will be focussed on. The Romance genre was by no means uniform: it could play into various other concerns and genres: historical, scientific, gothic, imperial, national, and detective. The loose brand of Romance which will be considered in this chapter is the Quest or Travel Romance, which generally involved cross-cultural contacts; a

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<sup>194</sup> Lang, 'Realism and Romance', p. 688.

<sup>195</sup> Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin-de-Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 78.

<sup>196</sup> Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p. 44.

<sup>197</sup> Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling and Conan Doyle* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998), p. 36.



concentration on adventure over character development; a rejection of conventionalism, the minute and the familiar in favour of the exhilarating; and was widely considered to be more 'manly' than Realism. In Stevenson's hands, this form of Romance blossomed and was used as a means to revive Scottish cultural identity.

### 1.5 Stevenson: Interrogating Fault Lines

According to Stuart Wallace, Geddes's equating of Blackie with Stevenson seems like 'the oddest feature' of 'The Scots Renaissance',<sup>198</sup> presumably owing to Stevenson's tendency to avoid Blackie's classes at Edinburgh University, according to his 'highly rational system of truancy'.<sup>199</sup> It is an understandable observation: Stevenson is rarely considered in relation to Scotland's socio-political context. Most accounts of the Scottish context on Stevenson tend to focus on the influence of Presbyterianism, as in those by G. K. Chesterton and Allen MacDuffie.<sup>200</sup> When the national question is considered, critics often read his works as elegiac expressions of 'national tragedy',<sup>201</sup> as in Julia Reid's descriptions of a *Kidnapped* (1886) as a 'bleak novel' that undercuts the 'meliorist account of Scotland's gradual process towards civilized modernity'.<sup>202</sup> Such readings fail to see his works in the context of an emerging national Renaissance, where this undercutting was not necessarily bleak.

When Stevenson is historicised it becomes clear that he was preoccupied with ideas similar to those of Geddes, Blackie and others in the period. Stevenson was intensely interested in the Union and planned to write a book titled 'Scotland and the Union', to accompany 'The Transformation of the Scottish Highlands', a further

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<sup>198</sup> Wallace, *John Stuart Blackie*, p. 316.

<sup>199</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Memories and Portraits* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 32; Stevenson does note Blackie's 'human geniality' as a professor though in 'The Foreigner at Home' – see Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers and other essays*, ed. by Jeremy Treglown (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988), p. 169.

<sup>200</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), pp. 124-134; Allen MacDuffie, 'Irreversible Transformations: Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and Scottish Energy Science', *Representations*, 96 (2006), 1-20.

<sup>201</sup> Alison Lumsden, 'Stevenson, Scott and Scottish History', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Penny Fielding (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 70-85 (p. 72)

<sup>202</sup> Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 131.

planned book on the suppression of the Highlands.<sup>203</sup> Although the former was never written, his views on the condition of the Union can be gleaned from his essay 'Confessions of a Unionist' (1888). As the word 'confessions' suggests, although Stevenson defines himself as a Unionist, he is dissatisfied and perhaps even partially ashamed of his Unionism; indeed, he states that he had 'been in favour of home rule for Ireland ten or a dozen years before Mr Gladstone' but now finds himself in 'the camp of Union' due to Irish violence.<sup>204</sup> In the essay, Stevenson outlines some of his grievances with Westminster rule. He reveals his opposition to Landlordism<sup>205</sup> and he blames the problems in the Highlands and Ireland on English 'indifference'.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, he considers the Irish situation through comparison with Scotland: 'I fear they have suffered many of the injustices, of the Scottish Highlanders'.<sup>207</sup> He also critiques Westminster's surrender to, what he interprets as, Ireland's Home Rule bullying tactics: 'what sheep they are in England [...] you have no idea in what disarmed, unwieldy helplessness we lie at the mercy of parliamentary obstruction and agrarian brutality'.<sup>208</sup> Although he does not explicitly voice support for Scottish Home Rule here, there is certainly great discontent with Westminster's management and a feeling that the Scots are suffering as a cause of it. His use of language is revealing in this quotation: describing the English as 'sheep' links his dismissal of them to the Clearances, which he described as 'inhuman'.<sup>209</sup> He contrasts this sheepishness with Americans who have a 'semi-barbarous self-reliance' which means they have a more 'masculine' resolve.<sup>210</sup> Similarly, the word 'we' is revealing: it is ambiguous as earlier he uses it to refer to British people but, in this paragraph, he posits the 'we' against Ireland and England – it could be read as a Scottish 'we', dissociating Scotland from England and Ireland. His desire for Scotland to be differentiated, rather than

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<sup>203</sup> *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Sidney Colvin, 5 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1924), II, pp. 138-139 (21 December 1880).

<sup>204</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 238; Stevenson wrote to Anne Jenkins in 1887 and proposed going to Ireland to help on the Curtin farm, where Loyalists were being persecuted by Irish nationalists: see *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, III, pp. 124-128 (15 April 1887).

<sup>205</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 242.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>207</sup> *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, II, pp. 138-139 (21 December 1880).

<sup>208</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 243.

<sup>209</sup> *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, II, pp. 139-140 (December 1880).

<sup>210</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 243.

accommodated, is revealed in his response to S. R. Crockett signing off a letter to Stevenson with the abbreviation 'NB' (North Britain): 'Don't put "N.B." in your paper; put *Scotland* and be done with it. Alas, that I should be stabbed in the house of my friends! The name of my native land is not *North Britain*, whatever may be the name of yours'.<sup>211</sup> Again, Stevenson draws on some typical features of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish nationalism: reclaiming barbarity over 'civilisation', celebrating manliness and resisting incorporation. The essay shows how Scotland could start to define itself in opposition to the other parties in the Union, especially England, and less as a party integrally connected to the others.

Stevenson's challenges to narratives of 'civilisation' link him to the culture of Decadence and this connection is revealed in other aspects of his work that had ties to Decadent tropes. Stevenson outlined his belief in the importance of idleness in his essay 'An Apology for Idlers' and he contributed to 'art-for-art's-sake' debates when he argued that art is independent of life, 'self-contained',<sup>212</sup> in his essay 'A Humble Remonstrance', a response to Henry James's views on fiction. Furthermore, Stevenson was greatly admired by the Decadents. Kirsten Macleod notes that Dowson, Symonds, Maclaren, Davidson and Yeats were drawn to Stevenson's work.<sup>213</sup> Although popular, adventure Romances are often seen as the opposite of Decadence,<sup>214</sup> both created space to resist Realism while Romance could confront narratives of improvement, much like Decadence.

Stevenson's novels can be situated in relation to this emerging Scottish socio-political and cultural movement; I demonstrate that his Romances (and essays) pursue some remarkably similar ends to those of Blackie in laying the ground for and engendering a Scottish movement. Like Blackie, Stevenson acknowledges that the main obstruction inhibiting Scottish national confidence is the Highland-Lowland divide. This is clearly expressed in his essay 'The Scot Abroad' (a chapter from *The Silverado*

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<sup>211</sup> *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, III, pp. 185-186 (10 April 1888).

<sup>212</sup> *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 195.

<sup>213</sup> Macleod, p. 50.

<sup>214</sup> Macleod, p. 49

*Squatters* (1883), his chronicles of travelling in California), which includes a quotation from 'The Canadian Boat-Song' (1829), famously of disputed authorship:

From the dim sheiling on the misty island  
Mountains divide us, and a world of seas;  
Yet still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,  
And we, in dreams, behold the Hebrides.<sup>215</sup>

This well-known song is believed to have been recited in 1885 by Joseph Chamberlain when visiting Inverness<sup>216</sup> to address the Crofting question and argue for communal land ownership on his Fiery Cross tour, which 'struck the imagination' of 'radical Scotland'.<sup>217</sup> The song offers an incredibly Highland voice but, directly following the quotation, Stevenson includes an additional line: 'And, Highland and Lowland, all our hearts are Scotch'.<sup>218</sup> When placed in its context, it is clear that this is not simply an expression of homesickness; Stevenson is making a bold claim. Earlier in the chapter, he acknowledges how pluralistic collective identity in Scotland was in the Victorian period:

Countless local patriotisms and prejudices [...] part us among ourselves more widely than the extreme east and west of that great continent of America. When I am at home, I feel a man from Glasgow to be something like a rival, a man from Barra to be more than half a foreigner. Yet let us meet in some far country, and, whether we hail from the braes of Manor or the braes of Mar, some ready-made affection joins us on the instant.<sup>219</sup>

Stevenson acknowledges how divided Scottish culture and nationality could be in this period: a Highlander could be seen as 'half a foreigner' to the Lowlander. He appears to be critical of this situation and his additional line to 'The Canadian Boat-Song' seeks to reconcile the two under the banner of one Scottish nationality. He continues to pursue this end in his novels: in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, Stevenson repeatedly seeks to unify the Lowlander and Highlander. This, it will be shown, is the first aspect of proto-cultural nationalism in Stevenson's Romances.

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<sup>215</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters* (Boston: Robert Brothers, 1884), p. 65.

<sup>216</sup> 'The Canadian Boat-Song and its Authorship', *The Review of Reviews*, 41 (1910), p. 46.

<sup>217</sup> Alfred Milner and others, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London: Carmelite House, 1914), pp. 166-168.

<sup>218</sup> Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 65.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

Criticism on *Kidnapped* frequently discusses the Highland-Lowland divide but it is often misguided. The novel is frequently considered a continuation of Walter Scott's national Romances, focusing on the Highland-Lowland divide Scott also invokes. Although her reading of *Kidnapped* is perhaps the most sophisticated available, Julia Reid's claim that Stevenson maintains the portrayal of 'Scotland as an irreconcilably divided nation' urgently needs adjusting.<sup>220</sup> Alison Lumsden shares Reid's view: she believes that 'Scott's apparent aesthetics of reconciliation' give way 'to one of Stevensonian division'.<sup>221</sup> To counter these claims, Donald McFarlan has accurately noted that we need to be careful over accepting 'an over-simplistic duality'.<sup>222</sup> He also argues that the novel is a "'birth of a nation" portrait', however he sees the divisions in Scottish culture as the locus of its distinctive nationality, a nation of 'conflicting and contradictory strands of history':<sup>223</sup> a concept which Gregory Smith would develop and define as the Caledonian Antisyzygy in 1919. Such criticism does not attempt to understand Stevenson's interrogation of Scotland's contradictory identities. It also ignores the fact that, although Stevenson wanted to strengthen Scottish nationality, his works do not provide the birth of the nation; they build upon a tradition which aspects of Scott's work began, albeit with some notable differences.

There is abundant evidence throughout *Kidnapped* to prove that Stevenson is attempting a portrayal of Scotland that resists the Highland-Lowland divide. Stevenson himself stated of his protagonist, in a letter to J. M. Barrie: 'I gave my Lowlander a Gaelic name [...] I deny that there exists such a thing as a pure Saxon, and I think it more than questionable if there be such a thing as a pure Celt'.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, unlike in many of Scott's novels, there are no references in the entire text to 'Celtic' or 'Anglo-Saxon' identities: an ethnic vocabulary is purged. Here, we see evidence that Stevenson is not attempting to expose Scottish nationality as a union of two distinct, opposed cultures but show that these binary identities are false and that

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<sup>220</sup> Reid, p. 132.

<sup>221</sup> Lumsden, p. 73.

<sup>222</sup> Donald McFarlan, 'Introduction', in *Kidnapped*, ed. by Donald McFarlan (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. vii-xvi (p. ix).

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>224</sup> (cited in) David B. Morris, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Scottish Highlands* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1929), pp. 112-113.

more unites the two than many would believe. Likewise, he claimed that, in the novel, 'there is nothing of the melancholy of the Gael. Nor do we have any representative of the unmethodical and procrastinating Highlander',<sup>225</sup> again dismantling assumptions about Highland culture. Stevenson extends this examination throughout. It is particularly evident when David enters the Highlands and utters: "'If these are the wild Highlanders, I would wish my own folk wilder'".<sup>226</sup> Here, David not only interrogates the notion of the Highlanders as savage, he even inverts the established identity dichotomy by suggesting that the Lowlander is more savage than the Highlander. Later, there is a similar claim that 'we ourselves might take a lesson by these wild Highlanders' (p. 113). David also explicitly attacks the notion that the Highlands and Lowlands constitute different countries. In response to Alan's rebuff in the Highlands: 'as if this was your country!', David states: 'It's all Scotland' (p. 114).

Certainly, there are moments in the text when the boundary becomes re-inscribed. David does long for 'tunes of my own south country' (p. 132) and there is also discussion of him being on the 'wrong side of the Highland Line' (p. 170). However, what that Highland line really separates is again interrogated in the penultimate chapter, when Alan proposes that David's uncle Ebenezer, who arranged the kidnapping and has previously tried to kill David, must buy David or he will be killed:

'Troth, sir,' said Alan, 'I ask for nothing but plain dealing. In two words: do ye want the lad killed or kept?'

'O, sirs!' cried Ebenezer. 'O, sirs, me! that's no kind of language!'

'Killed or kept?' repeated Alan.

'O keepit, keepit!' wailed my uncle. [...] 'I never had naething to do with onything morally wrong; and I'm no gaun to pleasure a wild Hielandman.'

'Ye're unco scrupulous,' sneered Alan.

'I'm a man o' principle,' said Ebenezer simply; 'and if I have to pay for it, I'll have to pay for it.' (p. 198)

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>226</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), p. 91 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

The confused heteroglossia is revealing here. Ebenezer invokes the divide between Highlander and Lowlander again, by calling Alan 'wild'. However, while the Highlander uses a Standard English word ('kept') and the Lowlander uses Scots ('keepit'), the pair then switch idioms: Alan states 'ye're unco scrupulous' and Ebenezer returns to Standard English. Stevenson mischievously swaps their idioms around in order to interrogate their supposed division. Furthermore, the fact that the Lowlander Ebenezer is the villain of the text also helps to muddy the notion of the Highlanders as barbarous as opposed to the more civilised Lowlander. Indeed, Ebenezer often seems more akin to the image of the lawless Highlander: he betrays hospitality, sells David into slavery and tries to kill him by deception, not face-to-face. Stevenson goes out of his way repeatedly to remind the reader of the uselessness of the Highland-Lowland cultural fault line the characters keep trying to legitimise: tensions remain but their depth and purpose feel increasingly futile by the end of *Kidnapped*. Commentators who find the novel 'bleak' overlook the fact that the reader is continually made conscious of the need to see beyond and mock the imagined binaries the characters keep falling back into.

Beyond challenging the Highland-Lowland binary that inhibits Scottish nationality, Stevenson's Romances and essays are also keen to acknowledge Scotland's civic and cultural distinctions and distance Scotland from an assimilated British or English identity. This attempt is evident in the essay 'The Foreigner at Home' (1882). Here, Stevenson takes issue with the ignorance of the English towards Scottish law, history, religion and education<sup>227</sup> and seeks to demonstrate that, despite 'political aggregation' (p. 171), a Scottish identity exists. Although he acknowledges the Highland-Lowland divide, he seeks to unify these two cultures by placing them in opposition to England:

The Lowlander feels himself the sentimental countryman of the Highlander. When they meet abroad, they fall upon each other's necks in spirit; even at home there is a kind of clannish intimacy in their talk. But from his compatriot in the south the Lowlander

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<sup>227</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 165 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

stands consciously apart [...] his eyes are not at home in an English landscape or with English houses; his ear continues to remark the English speech; and even though his tongue acquire the Southern knack, he will still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind. (p. 171)

Here, Stevenson again expresses the idea that Scots are most unified abroad as the cultural divisions at home create animosity between them, a theme Buchan would replay in *Witch Wood* and 'The Earlier Affection', discussed below. Stevenson attempts to overcome this in 'The Foreigner at Home'. While communal identity had previously been constructed in a binary opposition between Highlander and Lowlander, Stevenson shifts this binary to Scotland and England in order to revive a Scottish national identity, where Scots can identify themselves, together, against English nationality. In the essay, Stevenson goes about outlining what this 'Scotch accent of the mind' consists of by contrasting what he sees as Scottish values with English ones. For example, Stevenson notes the lack of egalitarianism in England, in comparison to Scotland: '[In England] the dull, neglected peasant, sunk in matter, insolent, gross and servile, makes a startling contrast with our own long-legged, long-headed, thoughtful, Bible-quoting ploughman' (p. 167). Stevenson's various depictions of Scotland are certainly idealised, complemented by patronising representations of England, but what they reveal is an attempt to reconfigure communal identity relations. The Highland 'foreigner' he mourns in 'The Scot Abroad' is portrayed here as reconciled into a broader Scottish nationality. The foreigner in this essay is English. For Stevenson, Highlander and Lowlander should not distance themselves from each other but understand their real cultural and civic unity and resist any further 'aggregation' which could 'supplant' Scottish culture.<sup>228</sup>

Stevenson's attempts to position Scotland in opposition to England are also evident in his Romances, namely *Catriona*. As in 'The Scot Abroad', *Catriona* demonstrates how common Scottish nationality can be achieved in foreign territories but, in this instance, it is bolstered by an English background. The novel is another

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<sup>228</sup> In 'The Foreigner at Home', Stevenson argues that England's responses to its neighbours resemble American missionaries who know nothing of the religions they wish to 'supplant' (*The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 164).



example of a situation where Highlanders and Lowlanders end up 'in the pot together' (p. 19). The usual Highland-Lowland binaries are established: Highlanders are 'barbarians' who must be 'civilized' by the Lowland Whigs (p. 34), who ironically are intent on convicting a man regardless of the evidence against him. Like *Kidnapped*, suggestions are made that they are not so different; the Lothians, for instance, are portrayed as 'rough' and 'wild' (p. 111). The relationship between the two protagonists also embodies re-unification. The lovers, Catriona and David, who represent Highland and Lowland cultures respectively, grow closer, especially while in Holland. However, the more Catriona identifies with her father, James More – who hates the English language (p. 229) and Lowlanders, the more difference between them is created; there is a struggle for the two to come together. It is only after she turns against her father, following his attempts to make David marry her, that they reconcile at Dunkirk. The context their reconciliation and marriage occurs in is striking:

'I have nothing left to give or to take back,' said she. 'I was all yours from the first day, if you would have had a gift of me!' she said.

This was on the summit of a brae; the place was windy and conspicuous, we were to be seen there from the English ship; but I kneeled before her in the sand, and embraced her knees, and burst into that storm of weeping that I thought it must have broken me.' (p. 258)

It is with the threat of England in the background, and their common opposition to it, that the two unite. We also learn that Catriona's father has betrayed Alan; the quasi-villain of the novel turns out to be complicit with the English. Consequently, Catriona pledges herself to Alpin and tells her father to 'begone' (p. 264); it is a highly similar ending to *Kidnapped's* where Ebenezer (who is anti-Highland, as opposed to James who is anti-Lowland) is overcome. The divisions at the end of the novel instead turn to Scotland and England – 'here's a Scots boot for your English hurdies!' (p. 262), says Alan to a feigning Englishman. The Scots become reconciled, embodied by Bohaldie's statement in the final pages: 'It's an ill bird that fouls his own nest, and we are all Scots folk and all Hieland' (p. 267). To this, they 'were all agreed' (p. 267). It is important that common Scottish identity is identified as Highland here: a united

Scottish identity is associated with the culture of Scotland that cannot be accommodated, rather than the culture that can. Like Scott, Stevenson tries to associate Scottish identity with the Highlands but, unlike Scott, there is very little concession to any Saxonism: Stevenson is more concerned with differentiating Scotland. By imagining themselves as united and identifying with Highland culture, the Scots resist an incorporating, Saxonist identity.

Stevenson not only exposes the problems with the Highland-Lowland binary and seeks to re-unify Scotland – like Blackie and others in the period – but he very carefully attempts to disrupt the stadial historiography that was believed to be responsible for dividing Scotland. This project is particularly evident in his other two Scottish novels: *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) and *Weir of Hermiston* (1896). The beginning of *Ballantrae* can be interpreted as a pointed critique of Enlightenment stadialism, which underpins the Highland-Lowland binary. It opens as a national Romance where Henry and James toss a coin to decide which one will support the Stuarts and which one the Hanoverians, thereby preserving their family's power in the event of victory or defeat for the Jacobites. Pittock has argued:

While Henry and Mackellar represent Whig modernity and the Master the Jacobite past, it is they who are the more superstitious, brutal, and racist. [...] Progress, as a historical phenomenon, is vitiated; and a repeated metaphor of tossing a coin in the narrative, signifies not only the doubleness of the brothers and the Scottish character, but also the fact that there are two sides to every story, that virtues in the past are lost in journeying to the future.<sup>229</sup>

The fact that the entire plot rests on the tossing of a coin disrupts the idea of history as linear teleology. Stevenson is resisting the stadial narratives which underpin the division of Scotland; indeed, it is unsurprising that Stevenson criticised Hume who, he believed, 'ruined Philosophy and Faith':<sup>230</sup> Stevenson has little time for his notions of history either.

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<sup>229</sup> Murray Pittock, 'Sir Walter Scott; historiography contested by fiction', in *The Cambridge History of the English Novel*, ed. by Robert L. Caserio and Clement Hawes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 277-291 (p. 289).

<sup>230</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers and other essays*, p. 92.

This critique of stadialism runs throughout the novel and underpins Stevenson's representation of Scotland. *Ballantrae* is less directly concerned with the Highland-Lowland binary than *Kidnapped*; instead, it focuses on the divided loyalty to the Hanoverians and the Jacobites experienced in Scotland (although the Highland-Lowland binary is subtly inflected into the Romance). Nevertheless, the futility of this division and its impact on Scottish identity is increasingly exposed throughout the novel as both brothers grow to loathe one another and, quite literally, battle between themselves. Their names, Henry and James, emphasise this: they refer to the dynastic split of the Tudors and Stuarts. Brothers, who should be united, are divided and eventually die as a cause of it; preservation is not achieved. In the course of the novel, the two also forget their country: James, for instance, is described as having 'withdrew himself from his own country-folk'<sup>231</sup> almost immediately after the coin tossing, instead finding kinship with the Irish. The problems that unionism, and stadial historiography, create for Scotland are perhaps alluded to when Mackellar states: "'I have bridged the Tweed and split the Eildons'" (p. 187); to connect Scotland and England is, in some way, to split Scotland. The novel is centrally concerned with the dynamic between connection and division.

Although the novel moves from national to imperial Romance, it continues to comment on the Scottish predicament, in the context of stadialism, as the imperial territories are often correlated to Scotland. Albany, New York, for instance, is where the novel concludes and it has clearly been chosen for its connection to Scotland: Albany was named so to commemorate James II of England and VII of Scotland who was Duke of Albany, the territory north of the river Forth, which 'bridles the wild Hielandman'.<sup>232</sup> Albany was also once a dukedom for the heir of the King of Scots and it became a Jacobite peerage, held by Charlotte Stuart – the illegitimate daughter of Charles Edward. As in Albany in Scotland, the native American inhabitants here are received as barbaric and primitive: it is a 'savage country' (p. 193) and, earlier, there

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<sup>231</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1992), p. 6 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>232</sup> Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, p. 171.

is a discussion of a 'line' which separates the civilised from the savages (p. 54). James also prefers the company of these 'savage men' to 'traitors' (p. 196), we are told. There is a subtle link between the other 'primitive' figures and the Jacobites.

Sir William Johnson, the renowned Irish diplomat and Indian officer in America who established trade links between New York merchants and the native Americans features in the novel towards its conclusion. As Fintan O'Toole demonstrates, Johnson became immersed in native American cultures and styled himself 'not as a white settler and trader, but as a Mohawk war chief'.<sup>233</sup> His mission is compared to the Jacobite-Hanoverian (and Highland-Lowland) divide, further associating the Jacobite Highlanders with Indians, when Mackellar notes: '[Johnson's] standing with the painted braves may be compared to that of my Lord President Culloden among the chiefs of our own Highlanders at the 'Forty Five' (p. 207). Johnson's attempts at 'pacifying the frontier'<sup>234</sup> in America become an allegory for Scotland and Stevenson's own quest to bring the nation together once more. Although the novel finishes with both brothers dying, Mackellar's new-found respect for James (evident in his gravestone inscriptions) shows that he achieves a more balanced perspective, casting aside the division and hatred he felt in the earlier part of the novel. It is perhaps no surprise that a character named Pinkerton, alluding to the Enlightenment stadialist, is briefly brought in at the end, only to be killed and 'buried hard' (p. 205). Diplomacy and reconciliation between the progressive 'civilised' and the backward 'savage', which Sir William Johnson represents, seem to prevail over the existence of antagonistic cultures nurtured by progressive, teleological narratives of history. Antagonisms are put to rest and the ground is laid for developing reconciliation. As in 'The Scot Abroad', Stevenson finds that the Empire and territories abroad provide a space for conciliatory unity between divided characters and cultures.

Challenges to the notions of linear progress and stadialism are also central to *Weir of Hermiston*. Caroline McCracken-Flesher has argued that, during his time in

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<sup>233</sup> Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 77.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

the South Seas, Stevenson became sceptical about Scotland's self-imagining: 'Iconic Scottishness and royal beauty take a tumble in Stevenson's more fully informed eye'.<sup>235</sup> However, this does not appear to be reflected in *Weir of Hermiston*. The novel is concerned with the relationship of the individual to ancestry, and its discussions of familial and national ancestries seem to overlap. Archie's conflict with his father is pronounced and reflects his dislocation from the nation. Lord Glenalmond states of Archie's father, Lord Hermiston: 'he has all the Roman virtues: Cato and Brutus were such; I think a son's heart might well be proud of such an ancestry of one',<sup>236</sup> to which Archie bitterly replies: 'I would sooner he were a plaided herd' (p. 16). As a consequence of spurning his ancestral glory, a Sartrean nausea overcomes Archie and he struggles to find a meaning for his existence in a world surrounded by others who seem to possess the 'essential self' (p. 70). This is evident following the sentencing of Duncan Jopp, by Archie's father, when Archie passes Holyrood:

He saw Holyrood in a dream, remembrance of its romance awoke in him and faded; he had a vision of the old radiant stories, of Queen Mary and Prince Charlie, of the hooded stag, of the splendour and crime, the velvet and bright iron of the past; and dismissed them with a cry of pain [...] "This is my father," he said. "I draw my life from him; the flesh upon my bones is his, the bread I am fed with is the wages of these horrors." He recalled his mother, and ground his forehead in the earth. He thought of flight, and where was he to flee to? of other lives, but was there any life worth living in this den of savage and jeering animals? (p. 21)

Like the paternal ancestry he is severed from, Archie struggles to reconcile with the nation too. His remembrance of the pre-Enlightenment national past is 'radiant' with 'splendour' and yet the current state of the nation is far different. The capital is portrayed as a 'den' of 'animals' (which again breaks down the Highland-Lowland cultural distinction) who celebrate the capital punishment advocated by John Calvin, another grievance Archie has with his contemporary Scotland (pp. 28-29). It is not simply a critique of Scotland but a wider challenge to stadialism: Archie does not find

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<sup>235</sup> Caroline McCracken-Flesher, 'Travel Writing', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Penny Fielding (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 86-101 (p. 99).

<sup>236</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Weir of Hermiston* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1995), pp. 15-16 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

progress here; instead, present-day Edinburgh is 'savage' and he longs to identify with the national, heroic past to replace the familial lack and savagery of professional Edinburgh.

Archie's struggle with narratives of improvement is complemented by the fact that the 'aboriginal memory' (p. 62), which Penny Fielding discussed in *Writing and Orality*,<sup>237</sup> is represented as an integral part of Scottish national identity: 'for that is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to most Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation' (p. 46). The Scottish nationality portrayed in *Weir* is rooted in its ancestry, a feature with which Archie struggles, knowing that his father is part of him. However, this identity also allows Archie and others to not only acknowledge but to experience a past, an identification which challenges Enlightenment stadialism. Stevenson's novels are not narratives which validate binary oppositions or stadialist phases, as most critics have suggested; he resists them through exposition and attempts to create reconciliation 'between [...] natures so antipathetic' (p. 24). Through his literary device and use of genre, Stevenson manages to not only interrogate conceptions of divided Scottish national identity but to undercut the stadial historiography that sustains them.

A final way Stevenson's Romances could lend themselves well to the developing Scottish movement was that, for Stevenson, the genre itself could resist the problems with 'English' culture. In his essay 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882), Stevenson critiques his English readership who, he believes, look down on novels of incident and adventure: 'English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate'.<sup>238</sup> Stevenson rejects the over-concern with character which he believes runs through the Victorian English novel and instead

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<sup>237</sup> Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture, and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 185.

<sup>238</sup> Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers*, p. 176.

prefers when 'we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and only then do we say we have been reading a romance'.<sup>239</sup> Of course, Stevenson's characterisations of English fiction are sweeping overstatements but what these exaggerations reveal is how keen he is to define himself, not simply in opposition to character-driven novels, but to English culture itself. Instead of aligning himself with 'English' novels of character, Stevenson aligns himself with the Romance tradition of Scott. He celebrates 'the Scotch' characters in Scott's works, who are 'delicate, strong and truthful'.<sup>240</sup> He resists 'portraiture' and instead pursues 'abstract types, so they be strongly and sincerely moved'<sup>241</sup> by the reader. There is a suggestion in the essay that Scotland is particularly well suited to the Romance genre, in a way that England is not; he subtly claims the genre for Scotland. This rejection of 'English' verisimilitude and establishment of a boundary between art and life – which Wilde later mimicked in 'The Critic as Artist' (1891) – provides an example of how certain Scottish (and Irish) writers and artists believed Aestheticism (which also expressed these values) could further their cultural nationalist ends.

Stevenson's treatment of the genre can also be said to include formal characteristics that are important in a Scottish context. As Maureen M. Martin accurately notes, *The Master of Ballantrae* is not simply concerned with recounting a national tale but the *telling* of a national tale, or rather how history is told.<sup>242</sup> The novel is a patchwork of different narratives and becomes highly metafictional through doing so: we are continually conscious that this information is being mediated to us, and edited, by a variety of voices through the 'found manuscript' device, commonly used in Scottish literature (in Hogg's, Scott's and more recently in Alasdair Gray's work). Stevenson even interjects into the narrative to inform us that 'Five pages of Mr Mackellar's MS are omitted' (p. 123) at one point. This is not because the fictional 'R.L.S' has lost them; indeed, he tells us that he has perused them. He simply doesn't

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>242</sup> Martin, *The Mighty Scot*, pp. 110-111.

want to include them and we are never told why. The effect of this is that the reader is deliberately made aware of the fabricated nature of such national Romances and national history. By rejecting the hierarchy of discourses that provide narrative clarity, which Catherine Belsey associates with Classic Realism,<sup>243</sup> Stevenson not only further rejects the Realist novel tradition but encourages his readership to be sceptical over the way Scottish history is presented through national Romance. As Martin concludes, Stevenson cannot accept the 'deeply flawed narratives of Scottish identity'.<sup>244</sup> The main fabrication he takes issue with and exposes by the end of the novel is the Highland-Lowland divide.

From this evidence, it is clear that Stevenson needs to be read in light of the Scottish cultural nationalist movement at the *fin de siècle*, one which tried to rupture stadial historiography that tended to encourage characterisations of Scotland as a divided nation and, instead, pave the way for a unified nation and an integrated cultural nationalism. Although Stevenson's amorphous ideas can contradict themselves at times – for instance, he speaks with enthusiasm on 'the euthanasia of ancient nations' –<sup>245</sup> it is clear that he was engaged in, and contributed to, the developing cultural nationalism in Scotland. It is unsurprising that Geddes describes Stevenson, along with John Stuart Blackie, as 'Ultimus Scotorum' and planned to publish a volume on Stevenson in the Spring of 1895. However, Stevenson was not the only Scottish writer of Romance who was interested in reclaiming the Scot and dissolving the Highland-Lowland divide. Conan Doyle's works, and several others', show that these ideas, with subtle distinctions, permeated Scotland.

## 1.6 Conan Doyle: Reclaiming the Celts

Conan Doyle is considered even less than Stevenson in the context of the Scottish movement, despite the fact that his work so strongly reflects the anxieties of *fin-de-*

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<sup>243</sup> Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Routledge, 1980), p. 70.

<sup>244</sup> Martin, *The Mighty Scot*, p. 127.

<sup>245</sup> Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters*, p. 44.



siècle Scotland. As will be discussed, not only did Conan Doyle convert to support Home Rule for Ireland, which had a particular impact on his representations of Scotland and Ireland in *The Lost World*, but his novel *The Mystery of Cloomber* (1889) demonstrates his desire to recover Scottish nationality. Before approaching *Cloomber* and *The Lost World*, it is important to grasp how concerned Conan Doyle was with the images of the Scot and Celt in his writings. In the later Holmes stories – such as ‘The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot’ (1910) and *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) – the protagonist exhibits his dexterity in, and feeling for, Celtic territories. In ‘Devil’s Foot’, set in Cornwall, Holmes’s pursuit of the murderer runs alongside his search for ‘neolithic’ man,<sup>246</sup> his interest in the Cornish language and the appeal he finds in ‘forgotten nations’ (p. 242). The story invites the reader to compare simian Sterndale with the ‘prehistoric strife’ (p. 242) of the territory he seeks revenge in. The fact that Holmes does not turn Sterndale in to the police is revealing; it is not only out of respect for the man’s motives but also his own identification with a less ‘civilised’ lifestyle that governs his choice: Holmes states that he may have acted like a ‘lawless lion hunter’ (p. 280) in similar conditions. This respect is amplified by the fact that Holmes resumes study of ‘Celtic speech’ (p. 281) directly after pardoning Sterndale. Nobility is found in the sinister Celtic land.

This threatening mysteriousness also appears in an earlier story, ‘John Barrington Cowles’ (1884). In this tale, set in Edinburgh, Miss Northcott, a mesmerist with a “‘vampire soul behind a pretty face’”,<sup>247</sup> leads her suitors to their death, laughing when her fiancé, Mr Reeves, dies (p. 34). Conan Doyle also suggests that she is responsible for Cowles’s death: he disappears being led to a vision of her and is never seen again. It is no surprise that her name includes ‘North’: Conan Doyle is further associating Scotland with supernaturalism and mysticism – a tendency further examined in Chapter 4. Scotland and the Celtic territories, throughout Conan Doyle’s works, are presented as the preserves of spiritualism and mystery, of knowledge and

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<sup>246</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *His Last Bow: A Reminiscence of Sherlock Holmes* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), p. 256 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>247</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Edinburgh Stories*, ed. by Owen Dudley Edwards (Edinburgh: E.U.S.P.B, 1981), p. 36 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

contact with the other world and intuition, all of which he himself was greatly interested in in this period.

In Conan Doyle's *Romances*, his interest in Scottish and Celtic identity is revealed most clearly. In *The Mystery of Cloomber*, we witness his most striking attempt to prevent the marginalising of Scotland by Saxon materialism. Conan Doyle raises the issue of Scottish nationality early in the novel, as well as the growing British assimilationist attitude that was evident in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The narrator, Forthergill West, graduate of Law at St Andrews, is introduced to the new tenant of Cloomber Hall, in the South West of Scotland, General Heatherstone. Heatherstone is surprised at West's complexion:

'Good heavens, McNeil!' [Heatherstone] cried, in the same quivering voice as before, 'the fellow's as brown as chocolate. He's not an Englishman. You're not an Englishman – you, sir?'

'I'm a Scotsman, born and bred,' said I, with an inclination to laugh, which was only checked by my new acquaintance's obvious terror.

'A Scotsman, eh?' said he, with a sigh of relief. 'It's all one nowadays'.<sup>248</sup>

Heatherstone's ignorance of, and inability to recognise the distinctiveness of, Scotland and the Orient proves to be his ruin. Conan Doyle goes to great lengths to equate the Scots in the novel with the Orient. The darker skin of West here initially suggests his otherness but once the three Buddhists arrive in Wigtownshire, following the shipwreck of the Glasgow-bound Indian ship, these comparisons become more pointed. Ram Singh, the main Buddhist, wears a 'rough-spun tweed travelling suit' (p. 86), which West finds 'incongruous'. Although Heatherstone continues to identify the South West of Scotland as England and a 'hole' (p. 74), he is corrected by the Buddhists: 'I think you must be wrong in considering this to be a barbarous locality' (p. 74). Singh also informs West's father, who specialises in studying Oriental culture in Edinburgh, that 'your Eastern studies will have a lasting effect upon the knowledge and literature of your own country' (p. 85) and, in turn, his father describes these

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<sup>248</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Mystery of Cloomber* (London: Hesperus Press, 1889), p. 9 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

countries as his 'Eastern neighbours' (p. 89). There is a marked affection between the Buddhists and the Scots here against the marginalisation of each other by those who identify with England: the Scots study and relate to the Buddhists while the Buddhists feel close to the Scots.

The novel's concern with reclaiming Eastern ideas runs parallel with reclaiming Scotland. It is Heatherstone's ignorance of Oriental customs that are to blame for him killing the arch adept Ghoolab Shah, who was 'about to attain a height of occult knowledge which would have brought man one step nearer to his Creator' (p. 111), and his ignorance of Scottish customs reflects it. The final words spoken, or rather written, by Heatherstone highlight the novel's central preoccupations: 'My sad experience may show [Dr Easterling of Stranraer] that I spoke truth when I said that there was much knowledge in the world which has never found its way to England' (p. 116). Heatherstone acknowledges his ignorance but still refers to Scotland as England. His son is no different; after his father's disappearance, he states: 'we shall see what the laws of England have to say upon it' (p. 122), ignorant of Scotland's independent legal system. The narrator never explicitly corrects this but does note how his evidence 'corroborates' (p. 124) his views, invoking Scots Law. Conan Doyle is incredibly subtle in his treatment of the Scottish problem but the novel is carefully designed to critique the assimilationist practice of the English and Scots who identify with England; indeed, Heatherstone's name could point to a Scottish nationality.

In the context of the Romance Revival, this is a strange novel: the protagonist hardly journeys at all, besides moving from Edinburgh to Wigtownshire which is not charted. The novel's Romance is instead generated by the retrospective narrative of Heatherstone in the East and in the journey of the Buddhists to Scotland; by these two means, journey and cultural contact enter the novel. Typical of many late nineteenth-century Romances, the narrative foregrounds that it is rooted in facts and evidence, justifying itself as equally authentic as Realism. Conan Doyle draws on the found manuscript tradition (p. 3), like Stevenson, to create tension over the narrator's anxiety to be factual: 'I have no wish that this narrative should degenerate into

anything approaching to romance, or that I should lose the thread of the facts which I have set myself to chronicle' (p. 24), an anxiety evident in other Romances of the period, such as *King Solomon's Mines*, and in the Holmes stories. He is keen to show that the mysterious and occult is 'hardly supernaturalism' (p. 20). As Robert Fraser notes, Conan Doyle tries to claim authenticity for the spiritual world,<sup>249</sup> as he would do later in his career with *The Land of Mist* (1926). For instance, in *Cloomber*, Heatherstone learns: 'our men of science must recognise powers and laws which can and have been used by man, but which are unknown to European civilisation' (p. 100). West agrees with this testimony: 'science is wrong' (p. 126), he states, and advises us to 'look to the East, from which all great movements come' (p. 126), subtly invoking the often misquoted line attributed to Voltaire: 'we look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilisation'.<sup>250</sup> It is unsurprising that the novel portrays the Scots as the most attuned to Eastern advantages. Conan Doyle identifies a Scottish temperament in his writings that is more in touch with the mysterious and the other, an indication of superiority that should not be marginalised by England or stadialist projects. Like Stevenson's texts, *Cloomber* forms part of the Scottish movement by reclaiming Scotland as a nation and resisting assimilation to Saxonist materialism through the Romance Revival.

This reclaiming of the non-English as equally capable if not more superior is also a clear concern in his later Quest Romance, *The Lost World* (1912). Colin Milton has argued that *The Lost World* celebrates 'a composite identity which is "Britishness"'.<sup>251</sup> However, it is necessary to note that, by the time Conan Doyle was writing *The Lost World*, he converted to support Home Rule for Ireland, having once been a General Election candidate for the Liberal Unionist Party in Edinburgh Central (1900) and the Scottish Borders (1906) – losing both times. His conversion was largely testament to witnessing the 'apparently complete success of Home Rule in South Africa' and the result of his friendship with the Irish nationalist Sir Roger Casement, a friendship which was nurtured by their common resistance to Leopold II's

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<sup>249</sup> Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance*, p. 15.

<sup>250</sup> For a discussion on this quote, see David Goudsward, *The Westford Knight and Henry Sinclair: Evidence of a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Scottish Voyage to North America* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2010), p. 221 n. 42.

<sup>251</sup> Colin Milton, 'Adult and Juvenile Fiction', in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, ed. by Susan Manning and others, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), II, pp. 286-300 (p. 299).

regime in the Congo.<sup>252</sup> Following his conversion, he wrote several articles on the subject. He stated in a letter to the Belfast *Evening Telegraph* in September 1911:

A solid loyal Ireland is the one thing which the Empire needs to make it impregnable, and I believe that the men of the North will have a patriotism so broad and enlightened that they will understand this, and will sacrifice for the moment their racial and religious feelings in the conviction that by so doing they are truly serving the Empire, and that under any form of rule their character and energy will give them large share in the government of the nation.<sup>253</sup>

Here, although Conan Doyle's commitment to the Empire is untarnished, he expresses the view that internal national unity was needed to facilitate cooperation across the Empire; a broader imperial whole needed unified subordinate parts. Understanding this interest in unifying and distinguishing the parts is essential when approaching Conan Doyle's stories, following his conversion to Home Rule. While in some of his earlier work – such as in *The Sign of Four* – there was a stress on coupling Celtic 'intuition' with 'exact knowledge',<sup>254</sup> in these stories the Celt no longer needs to be supported by Anglo-Saxon rationality to succeed: the Celt succeeds on its own terms and both the London-centric model of Empire and the Enlightenment's styling of the Celt are overthrown.

The beginning of *The Lost World* is striking for its representation of non-English people, considering it is set in London. McArdle, whose Scottish phrasing is parodied, mourns a lack of romance in the world, now that all the gaps in the map have been filled.<sup>255</sup> The narrator, Malone, is Irish and also seeks adventure (p. 9) and has an 'Irish imagination which makes the unknown and the untried more terrible than they are' (p. 79). The protagonist, Professor Challenger, is Scottish. Born in Largs and educated at Largs Academy, followed by Edinburgh University (p. 15), he expresses condemnation of 'the British hog' (p. 26). Malone even states of a lady he encounters

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<sup>252</sup> 'Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: A Home Ruler: The Example of South Africa', *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 12 November 1911, p. 6.

<sup>253</sup> (cited in) *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters*, ed. by Jon Lellenberg and others (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), p. 579.

<sup>254</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (London: Spencer Blackett, 1890), p. 8.

<sup>255</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World* (New York: A. L. Burt Company, 1912), pp. 14-15 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

that she is 'more French than English in her type' (p. 24). The reader is placed in a peculiarly un-English, even Celtic, London.

The novel is not without its English characters but even they appear remarkably un-English too. Whenever the opportunity arises to define or express English identity, Conan Doyle is keen to subvert it. Professor Murray, who has the 'common fault of most Englishmen of being inaudible' (p. 61), is not only mocked but he also has a surname which clearly nods to Scotland. Such use of surnames to complicate identity is also apparent with Professor Summerlee whose nationality is not verified, although he is described as the Londoners' representative on the quest (p. 71): the closest affiliation to the name in the period was Summerlee Ironworks in Coatbridge, Scotland. However, the attempt to complicate English identity in the novel is most clearly voiced in the depiction of Lord John Roxton. Roxton is initially described as the 'essence of the English country gentleman' (p. 77), but various aspects of his representation stand at odds to this. First, it is widely agreed that he is based on Casement, Conan Doyle's friend: not just any Irishman, but an influential Irish nationalist.<sup>256</sup> Casement's action against slavery in Peru and working with the Putumayo Indians are clearly referenced in Roxton's speech where he proudly narrates his attacks on Peruvian slave-drivers, including 'Pedro Lopez, the king of them all, that I killed in the backwater of the Putomayo River' (p. 82). The Congo, which Casement famously defended, is also referenced (p. 92).

However, Casement is not the only source for Roxton: another likely one is R. B. Cunninghame Graham,<sup>257</sup> whose work is discussed in more detail below. Cunninghame Graham was a supporter of Scottish Home Rule and became the first president of the Scottish National Party in 1934. Like Cunninghame Graham, who also spent time in South America, Roxton wears a 'South American poncho' (p. 197) and is compared to Don Quixote (p. 227). Cunninghame Graham so closely resembled Don Quixote that he was used as a model for etchings of the Spaniard, executed by William

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<sup>256</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, p. 578.

<sup>257</sup> Cedric Watts, 'Introduction', in *The Lost World & Other Stories* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2010), pp. vii-xxi (p. xviii).

Strang, and he was known as Don Roberto, or 'the modern Don Quixote'. Conan Doyle enjoyed carefully basing his characters on recognisable figures: it cannot be coincidental that the quintessentially English Roxton strongly appears to be based on two significant figures of the Irish and Scottish Home Rule movements, seeking autonomy from England. The fact that Roxton plans to move to Scotland (p. 77) and describes an Indian as a 'bonnie boy' (p. 236) substantiates this reading: Conan Doyle consciously subverts the Englishness of the quintessentially English character.

The end of *The Lost World* is striking for the manner in which it continues this subversion. The trial to ascertain the validity of the explorers' claims delivers a final verdict, by Dr Illingworth of Edinburgh, of 'not proven' (p. 295). This was known as the 'Scottish verdict' and applied to Scottish courts only, not the London setting Conan Doyle places the characters in at the end of the novel. The confusion in the audience following the verdict highlights the strange and distinctive Scottish voice, and Scottish system, that occupies London here. As in *Cloombur*, this novel uses Scottish civic culture to differentiate Scotland and, here, Conan Doyle projects that civic culture on to London. The English certainly are 'inaudible' in this novel.

Like Stevenson, Conan Doyle reclaims Scottish nationality while simultaneously rupturing stadialist historiography. In the novel, it is those on the margins who are most adept in the Empire;<sup>258</sup> the importance of the imperial core is continually subverted. Furthermore, civilised London (and Europe more widely) is at times portrayed as no better, even inferior, to the savage. In geography, the Amazon rainforest is correlated to Europe: its size is like Europe, stretching from Scotland to Constantinople (p. 83), and the plateau is the size of the 'average English county' (p. 194). Typical representations of the people are also challenged: Challenger, for instance, applauds 'primitive common sense' (p. 186) and states that Cucama Indians have 'mental powers hardly superior to the average Londoner' (p. 39). The stadialist binary is interrogated. Furthermore, the protagonist – a Lowland Scottish professional

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<sup>258</sup> For more on this aspect of the novel, see Ian Campbell, 'Disorientation of Place, Time and "Scottishness": Conan Doyle, Linklater, Gunn, Mackay Brown and Elphinstone', in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, ed. by Ian Brown and others, 3 vols (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007), III, pp. 106-129 (p. 112).

– has an ‘elephantine sense of humour’,<sup>259</sup> and he is compared to a ‘bull-frog’ (p. 38), a ‘monstrous beetle’ (p. 88), and even to the ape-man (p. 232): the ‘missing link’ (p. 194) between apes and humans. He moves from being the ‘highest product of modern civilization to the most desperate savage in South America’ (p. 232). Appearances are deceptive in *The Lost World*: the more savage characters are the most successful scientific and imperial explorers, even the most chivalrous, while London’s capability is subverted. Like Stevenson, Conan Doyle disrupts established binaries and encourages the reader to acknowledge the aptitude of the ‘barbarous’ Scots and Irish, particularly with the simian Scottish Challenger.

However, the novel can also legitimise stadialist narratives. We are told that the characters want to ‘get out of this horrible country and back once more to civilization’ (p. 259) and as much as London is mocked, they yearn for ‘the great mother city’ (p. 276). This contradiction is a telling one. At the turn of the century, while Scotland was attempting to critique a stadialist narrative, it was also proudly imperial – and empire depended on stadialist narratives to justify occupation. The occasional vindications of stadialist narratives in Conan Doyle’s work may well be a reflection of Scotland’s particular position in this period.

Conan Doyle’s similarities to Stevenson, in terms of his cultural nationalism, are also revealed in his comparisons between the Scottish and English education systems. Stevenson’s preference for the Scottish education system is echoed in Conan Doyle’s *The Firm of Girdlestone* (1889). The narrator notes, of the few university students whose ‘manliness and good sense keep them straight’, ‘they will have learned self-reliance, confidence, and, in a word, have become men of the world [in Scotland] while their *confreres* in England are still magnified schoolboys’.<sup>260</sup> The expression may also have influenced Buchan, who complained that Oxford was like ‘kindergarten’ compared to ‘the strenuous life of Glasgow’.<sup>261</sup> There was a common desire in this period to outline what distinguished Scotland’s civic culture from

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<sup>259</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Poison Belt* (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), pp. 15-16.

<sup>260</sup> (cited in) Owen Dudley Edwards, *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes: A Biographical Study of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1983), p. 178.

<sup>261</sup> (cited in) Paul H. Scott, *Towards Independence* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991), p. 186.



England's, and to show its superiority thus furthering the rising cultural and institutional nationalism.

### 1.7 Cunninghame Graham, Lang, Barrie and Buchan

Other writers throughout Scotland were also using the Romance genre for similar reasons. A writer, as well as a cultural and political nationalist, who was used for inspiration in *The Lost World*, Cunninghame Graham, also wrote Romance stories which were rooted in questioning narratives of improvement, reflecting his own rejection of 'industrial progress and creeping civilisation'.<sup>262</sup> This is most clearly revealed in his collection *Progress* (1905). In the Preface, 'to the progressive reader', he asks: 'who does not feel as if a slug was crawling on his soul on reading in some missionary report of all their misdirected labours and their sufferings, and of the perils that they have endured, to turn some fine free race of savages [...] into bad copies of our lowest class'.<sup>263</sup> This critique of imperialism is furthered in the first sketch, titled 'Progress', which retells a story by Heriberto Frias that illustrates the brutality of 'the great cause of progress and humanity'.<sup>264</sup> Here, the civilising agenda is played out in Tomochic in the Sierra Madre, and Cunninghame Graham continually scorns it through associations with bloody warfare: the repeated description of the 'civilising Hotchkiss gun' is one instance.<sup>265</sup> Some of these ideas are repeated in his sketch *Redeemed* (1927), rooted in Scotland:

When all is hushed at night and owls fly noiselessly, their flight hardly disturbing the still air, and the rare nocturnal animals that all-destroying progress (or what you call the thing) has left alive, surely the spirits of the nameless sleepers under the mossy turn rise like a vapour from their graves, commune with Cuchullin and with Fingal, pat Bran's rough head, and fight old battles once again.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> John Walker, 'Introduction', in *The Scottish Sketches of R. B. Cunninghame Graham*, ed. by John Walker (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982), pp. 1-15 (p. 4).

<sup>263</sup> R. B. Cunninghame Graham, *Progress: And Other Sketches* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1911), pp. 4-5.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>266</sup> R. B. Cunninghame Graham, *The Scottish Sketches of R. B. Cunninghame Graham*, ed. by John Walker (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982), pp. 49-50.

Supposed 'progress' is believed to be destroying what is valuable in Scottish myth and identity. This evocation of using nature to commune with Celtic gods is highly similar to descriptions in William Sharp's *The Washer of the Ford*, discussed in Chapter 3. Several of Cunninghame Graham's Romance sketches expose the notions of racial hierarchy that underpin imperial conquest, and this resistance could support his cultural nationalism.

Lang, Barrie and Buchan are also writers whose Romances similarly attempt to recover the Scottish or Celtic advantage. Lang was greatly interested in Scottish culture, writing several histories of the nation. In his essay 'Realism and Romance' (1887), he consciously revises the model of stadialism and claims space for Romance, which he sees as being maligned in culture: 'there is still room for romance, and love of romance, in civilized human nature'.<sup>267</sup> His Scottish stories, particularly the Stuart tales, were anthologised posthumously in 1928 as *Tartan Tales*, edited by Bertha L. Gunterman, but these stories are best considered in the context of Lang's original anthologies as the internationalism of them reveals some of his key concerns. *The Red True Story Book* (1895) is one of these international collections, which contains 'Prince Charlie's War' representing the conflict between the Hanoverian government and the Jacobites. Typical of Lang's collections, the story is preceded by a very similar tale, 'The Death of Hacon the Good', concerning the attempts made by Gunnhilda and her sons to recover the throne of Norway. This placement encourages international comparisons. In 'Prince Charlie's War', Lang maps out the importance of Jacobitism to the idea of the Scottish nation: it is argued that although Jacobitism was not necessarily about reclaiming Scottish independence, it was bound up with hostility felt over losing it.<sup>268</sup> Lang does not simply trace part of the history of the Jacobite rebellion here; in the final paragraph of the story, following the Battle of Culloden, he suggests that romantic Jacobitism is not a past stage:

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<sup>267</sup> Lang, 'Realism and Romance', p. 692.

<sup>268</sup> Andrew Lang, *The Red True Story Book* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1917), p. 269.

But it was not the end of the romance of the Highland clans. Crushed down, scattered, and cruelly treated as these were in the years that followed Culloden, nothing could break their fiery spirit nor kill their native aptitude for war. In the service of that very government which had dealt so harshly with them, they were to play a part in the world's history, wider, nobler, and not less romantic than that of fiercely faithful adherent to a dying cause. [...] And there may be other pages of this heroic history of the Highland regiments that our children and our children's children shall read with proud emotion in days that are to be.<sup>269</sup>

Here, Lang outlines his respect for the achievements of the Jacobites and also suggests that there may be more Jacobite action in the future. Strikingly, Lang notes the great impact which they have played 'in the world's history', detailing the many territories where they have conducted their 'imperishable deeds'. Militarist successes are connected to Jacobite loyalty, a theme which is also evident in other texts in this period, including A. C. MacDonell's *Lays of the Heather* (1896). Much like in Stevenson's and Conan Doyle's works, Lang's story disrupts stadialist representations of the Jacobite Highlander: this Romance allows Lang to focus on Charles Edward and to challenge the barbarity of the Highlander, while demonstrating the global influence and achievements of the Jacobites. In Lang's hands, the Highlands are placed within, and speak to, an international context; the images of parochial backwardness are again challenged and their aptitude is revealed.

*The Admirable Crichton* (1902), a play by J. M. Barrie – a writer who Geddes had in mind for contributing to *The Evergreen*,<sup>270</sup> is equally concerned with hierarchies and the subversion of them. In the play, the servant (named after the Scottish polymath, James Crichton) believes in social injustice, and the affluent are radicals who demand more equality. The play is clearly a satire of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, with a protagonist who goes by the name of Ernest and utters familiar Wildean epigrams. The characters become ship-wrecked on an island and this predicament is framed in the language of Romance: Mary, for one, feels as though she

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<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 322-323.

<sup>270</sup> Evergreen Business Committee Scroll Minute Book, 1895 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/1].

has lived 'the Arabian nights'.<sup>271</sup> When on the island, Crichton is the most adaptable and reaches the top of the hierarchy, becoming 'regal'.<sup>272</sup> However, when they return to England he becomes marginalised, although he will still not 'listen to a word against England'.<sup>273</sup> There appears to be a curious play with nationality here: if Crichton is to be associated with Scotland, as the title and his satirised love of England imply, we see a figure that reigns in Romance but is subordinate, and even asks for subordination, in domestic England. By presenting him in this manner, Barrie exposes Crichton's dexterity in managing the foreign land. The entire play is a series of jokes which blatantly invert stereotypes so we must be careful not to overstate readings of it but the play does satirise hierarchical structures of society. Barrie seems to be subtly challenging the stadial structure of British society and satirising its 'civilising' tendencies, much like Stevenson; the play reveals that the Scot can be the most effective manager of the Empire, as in *The Lost World*.

This reading of *Crichton* is supported by the fact that, in various other texts, Barrie is interested in recovering Scottish identity. *What Every Woman Knows* (1908) focuses on the Scotland-England axis: the first half set in Glasgow, the second in London. The play mocks both parties but it is the ability of Maggie (the Scotswoman) to advance John's political reputation, further the women's movement,<sup>274</sup> and finally win John back from Sibyl (the Englishwoman) that helps reclaim the position of the Scot. Maggie's practicality and savviness rise above a stereotyped presentation of English grace, embodied in the following discussion between the two women:

Maggie: Now's the time, Lady Sibyl, for you to have one of your inspiring ideas.

Sibyl: (ever ready) Yes, yes – but what?<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan and Other Plays*, ed. by Peter Hollindale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 62.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>274</sup> Barrie was also a vocal supporter of the women's movement; for more information, see R. D. S. Jack, 'Barrie and the Extreme Heroine', in *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. by Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 137-167 (pp. 137-138).

<sup>275</sup> Barrie, *Peter Pan*, p. 201.

It is a stereotyped image that Barrie enjoyed replaying, most notably in *Peter Pan* through Mr Darling's incompetence. Some of these concerns are also later touched on in *Mary Rose* (1920). The title itself implies conflict between the Scots and the English as the original Mary Rose was built partly as a response to James IV's large fleet that controlled the Western Isles. However, in this play, it is the Western Isles that take control. Here, Simon, who has learned that his wife, Mary, went missing on a Hebridean island, mocks Cameron's 'Highland stories' when they return: 'you and your bogies and wraiths, you man of the mists', implying that the stories are simply drummed up for tourism.<sup>276</sup> However, Cameron's story of the missing girl (Mary herself) is authenticated when Mary goes missing for a second time. Her parents try to leave it in 'the past', like Simon who states 'let's forget all about it' when he first hears, but Mary Rose returns as a ghost, seeking her child.<sup>277</sup> They can never be free of the Hebrides: they can never resign Celtic culture to the past; only Mary, ironically, forgets about the island. As in *Farewell, Miss Julie Logan* (1932), where Jacobite 'strangers' come back to honour and feed those they left behind and the protagonist fails to purge the memory of his encounter with Julie Logan (the 'papist')<sup>278</sup> by the burn where he dropped her, Scotland's heritage fights suppression.

Finally, it is necessary to briefly consider John Buchan in this context, who in many ways brings these threads together. Buchan, who contributed to *The Yellow Book* and visited the studios of Margaret and Frances Macdonald,<sup>279</sup> was, like other Scottish Romance writers, concerned with the 'coalescing of the Highlanders and the Lowlanders'.<sup>280</sup> He states in his 1927 speech 'Highland and Lowland', delivered in Scotland, that there was very little difference between them: 'Every part of Scotland is more or less of a racial mixture',<sup>281</sup> 'it is not a question of Celtic and Saxon', and that 'unifying literature' and identifying with common landscapes were ways the two could

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<sup>276</sup> Barrie, *Peter Pan*, pp. 223, 274.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 285.

<sup>278</sup> J. M. Barrie, *Farewell Miss Julie Logan: A Barrie Ominibus* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2000), p. 299.

<sup>279</sup> Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and The Modern Movement* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), p. 40.

<sup>280</sup> Peter Henshaw, 'John Buchan from the "Borders" to the "Berg": Nature, Empire and White South African Identity, 1901-1910', *African Studies*, 62.1 (2003), 3-32 (p. 4).

<sup>281</sup> John Buchan, 'Highland and Lowland', unpublished speech delivered on 26 January 1927 and 18 February 1928 [National Library of Scotland: Acc. 9058/5/1].

be brought together.<sup>282</sup> In 'The Earlier Affection', from *Grey Weather* (1899), like Stevenson, Buchan treats the Jacobite troubles. The story begins with Townsend who goes over the hills seeking his cousin Ewan who is wanted by the redcoats. He comes into contact with five merchants. One, Graham, of the Highland race, speaks out against the Highlanders: "'What have your Hielands done,'" he cries, "for the wellbeing of this land?'"<sup>283</sup> They find Ewan but the merchants have no intention to fight for him; the Deacon states: 'Are we to dip our hands in bluid to please a Hieland Jaicobite?' (p. 140). Ewan implores: 'But ye are Scots folk [...] ye will never see a countryman fall into the hands of redcoat English soldiers' (p. 140). When Ewan speaks in Gaelic they support his cause, although Graham is initially reluctant (pp. 141-2). Following their battle they express their 'triumph' and Graham calls Ewan his 'blood-brother' (p. 144). Their victory is far from the revival of a Jacobite Scotland – they acknowledge they will have to head to the seashore and a "'kinder land'" (p. 145), a theme revisited in *Witch Wood* (1927) – but it is another example of previously antagonistic Lowlanders embracing the 'Highland' cause and a Scottish Highland identity around the 1890s, with little feeling for Saxonism.<sup>284</sup> Like in *John MacNab* (1926) which presents Highlanders who initially assert 'There's no reason why we should continue to exist'<sup>285</sup> but progressively grow more confident, Buchan recovers their strength here. As in Stevenson's Romances, the dynamic in 'The Earlier Affection' moves from Highland against Lowland to Scots against the English, although with a sombre ending. The story reflects Buchan's own perspective: he believed that distinct cultures could, and should, operate within the Union.<sup>286</sup> With this in mind, it is unsurprising that Buchan, a Unionist Party candidate, would go on to state that 'every true Scotsman and Scotswoman should be a Scottish Nationalist'.<sup>287</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to understand

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> John Buchan, *Grey Weather: Moorland Tales of My Own People* (London: John Lane, 1899), p. 131 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>284</sup> *Witch Wood* (1927) similarly presents Scotland as an unkind land for the Scots: it ends with two pro-Covenant defenders of Scotland, the captain of Montrose's army and the protagonist, Semphill, being excommunicated from Scotland. The sombre final note of the novel suggests that the Scottish nationality can only be preserved in the diaspora: 'all roads are the same that lead forth of this waesome land'; see John Buchan, *Witch Wood* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1988) p. 289.

<sup>285</sup> John Buchan, *John Macnab* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 2007), p. 125.

<sup>286</sup> Henshaw, p. 18.

<sup>287</sup> (cited in) Scott, *Towards Independence*, p. 187.

why Robert Crawford so simplistically refers to Buchan as 'the last British writer' and considers him in opposition to the 'Scottish nationalist MacDiarmid'.<sup>288</sup> Certainly Buchan works within British contexts as well as Scottish ones but to place him in a unionist-nationalist binary grossly oversimplifies his thought and writings.

Buchan, like Barrie, develops on his concern with Scotland and stadialism throughout his life. In *Prester John* (1910), Buchan initially replays the binary between civilisation and barbarism, between the colonists and the native African uprising. However, towards the end of the text, Crawford, the narrator, increasingly finds South Africa akin to Scotland (as Buchan himself did):<sup>289</sup> the narrator compares South Africa to Kirkcaldy,<sup>290</sup> the landscape becomes 'homelike' (p. 185), and he develops a Scots vocabulary in South Africa (p. 234). Crawford, who proves adept in imperial territories, projects Scotland into South Africa and also finds it there. The conflation is underscored by the monument to Laputa, which is erected in Edinburgh (p. 271): Laputa is increasingly viewed as noble, in burying Crawford's 'brave dog' (p. 199), although it is still the 'white man's duty' (p. 264) to overthrow him and make sure he, who resists the 'bitterness' of civilisation, doesn't 'put the clock back' (p. 202). Laputa believed in 'Africa for the Africans' (pp. 97-98) which may explain why he and Africa are conflated with Scotland; there is a desire to incorporate, but also to differentiate, South Africa in the text: Laputa must be restrained but also appreciated. As in his later novel *A Prince of Captivity* (1933), attempts are made to restore the 'degenerating tribe to something like health' – be it the Scots, the Jews or the Hare tribe in Canada, represented in *Sick Heart River* (1941).<sup>291</sup> *Prester John* is a confused attempt to justify the Empire which, at times, problematises the civilised-degenerate binary and, at others, validates it, but the Scots' skill in the Empire is unquestionably foregrounded.

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<sup>288</sup> Robert Crawford, 'Dedefining Scotland', in *Studying British Cultures: An Introduction*, ed. by Susan Bassnett (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 88-103 (p. 100).

<sup>289</sup> Henshaw, pp. 6-7.

<sup>290</sup> John Buchan, *Prester John* (New York: John H. Doran Company, 1910), p. 169 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>291</sup> John Buchan, *A Prince of Captivity* (Edinburgh: B & W Publishing, 1996), p. 201.

## 1.8 Conclusion

At Blackie's funeral in Edinburgh, Geddes observed 'the majesty of Celtic sorrow' in all of its 'wildness'. In doing so, Geddes was reclaiming Scotland's capital for the Celts.<sup>292</sup> The identification of the people of Edinburgh as 'Celtic' shows the degree to which Geddes wanted to reimagine ethnic politics in nineteenth-century Scotland. The nation was moving away from having a divided, confused ethnicity to one that was more confidently unified, one that could identify Edinburgh, at the heart of the Lothians, not as Saxon but Celtic. In this context, it is clear why Geddes closely associated himself and the Scots Renaissance with the tradition of Blackie and Stevenson: together, they managed to challenge the divided ethnicity of Scotland and work towards creating a unified imagined community for Scotland. While in Scott's works there was confusion (simultaneously attempting to identify with the Highlands while acknowledging racial difference), by the 1880s many in Scotland were beginning to cast off the Teutonist ethnology.

Although the Romance Revival could vindicate stadialism, it has been demonstrated it could also be an important genre for challenging it and beginning to recuperate the Celt, the Scot and other marginalised cultures. The figures discussed in this chapter succeeded in questioning the division in Scotland that had been nurtured by stadial historiography and this questioning was fundamental to *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism. In many ways, the topics in the following chapters reflect and build on the resistance to the stadialist centre-margin dynamic that is evident in the novels and stories considered here: orientalism, paganism, the occult, and the pageant could all be means of (at least partly) distinguishing Scotland and resisting marginalisation by the narratives of Enlightenment political economy. Romance novels and stories worked alongside Decadence in their questioning of progressivist narratives. It is clear that the Romance Revival needs to be more readily considered in the context of the wider *fin de siècle* and cultural nationalism. Like

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<sup>292</sup> Geddes, 'The Scots Renaissance', p. 131.



Romance, Aestheticism (for instance) resisted conventionalism, styled itself (partially, at least) in opposition to Realism, and 'l'art pour l'art' had affinities with the idea of 'stories told for the story's sake',<sup>293</sup> as Lang defined Romance. To be opposed to Saxonism, as these Scottish Romances generally were, also created affinities with Decadence as it was at times closely associated with Celticism.<sup>294</sup> Critiques of stadialism and the divide between the Highlands and the Lowlands laid the essential foundations for the *fin-de-siècle* Scottish movement as these critiques underpinned the enthusiasm for Decadent tropes in Scotland, as the next four chapters will demonstrate.

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<sup>293</sup> Lang (1887), p. 689.

<sup>294</sup> Young, p. 93.

## **2 Inspiring Renaissance, Yoking Peripheral Cultures: *La Jeune Belgique* and *Japonisme* in *Fin-de-Siècle* Scotland**

## 2.1 Introduction

In his article 'Peripheral Modernities: National and Global in a Post-Colonial Frame', Luke Gibbons discusses the orientalism of nineteenth-century Irish culture, a development on his earlier work regarding centre-periphery dynamics in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> He argues that Ireland's identification with other nations which were also represented as having less 'civilised' cultures could support and further the development of its national consciousness. Unlike the many interpretations of cultural nationalism which, as Marilyn Reizbaum states, are stereotyped as 'kailyard' and nostalgic,<sup>2</sup> he argues that national identity was not developed through 'independence, autonomy, or indigenous origins' alone but also through 'international colloquy'.<sup>3</sup> Citing Stanley Mitchell, he states that there could be "'connections of dissimilars'" 'that develop outside the dominant ideologies of imperial civility' (p. 272). Such cultures could be 'yoked together' creating a 'violent proximity', Gibbons argues (p. 272), one that could challenge the hegemony of the 'progress' narrative which assumed that less industrialised countries were insular. Gibbons contends that enlightened progress is often 'pictured as spreading from sophisticated urban and industrial enclaves to more backward, outlying regions, producing, at best, local inflections of the modern or, at worst, mere colonial mimicry of the master's voice [... but] what this scheme overlooks is the extent to which the periphery or the "pre-modern" is already emplotted within the world system' (p. 273). Internationalism and questioning Enlightenment liberalism were not antithetical projects. Instead, international affiliations could support a resistance to stadialist 'progressive' narratives; by creating 'transnational affiliations or solidarities', 'the power of the centre' could be denied (p. 274) and a counter-hegemony created.

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<sup>1</sup> For an example of this work, see Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Marilyn Reizbaum, 'Canonical Double Cross: Scottish and Irish Women's Writing', in *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth-Century 'British Literary Canons'*, ed. by Karen R. Lawrence (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), pp. 165-190 (p. 167).

<sup>3</sup> Luke Gibbons, 'Peripheral Modernities: National and Global in a Post-Colonial Frame', *Nineteenth Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 29.2-3 (2007), 271-281 (p. 273) [future references to this issue are given in brackets after quotations].

This chapter will explore such cultural connections in *fin de siècle* Scotland. Developing on the first chapter, which demonstrated how stadial historiography was ruptured by cultural figures and Romance novelists in order to lay the ground for a unified Scottish cultural nationalism, 'Inspiring Renaissance, Yoking Peripheral Cultures' explores how cultural nationalists used inter-cultural affiliations to inspire their reclamation of Scottish nationality, form solidarities that challenged the metropole and style a particular Scottish international cultural voice. Through the Romance genre, Scottish cultural nationalists could interrogate the impact of stadialism in Scotland but, through international yokings – to use Gibbons's term, they could draw from other cultures to empower this interrogation, resist marginalisation and start building up Scotland's own cultural voice and position in the world.



Figure 2.1: John Duncan, *The Way to Rheims*, illustration for *The Evergreen*, 1896

Oddly, the concept of the peripheral modernity has had little application to late nineteenth-century Scotland, a time when the nation was yoking its culture so frequently with other traditions to resist marginalisation. Critics have examined several interactions but these have either not been peripheral interactions or they have not been treated in the context of supporting cultural nationalism. Perhaps the most examined *fin-de-siècle* Scottish international connection is the French, detailed in Sian Reynold's *Paris-Edinburgh* and the edited collection *Patrick Geddes: The French*

*Connection*.<sup>4</sup> These treatments have focussed on Scotland's various cultural connections with France in the period, including the Franco-Scottish Society (1895), established by Geddes, which attempted to rekindle a bond which had once supported Scotland's resistance to incorporation and assimilation and could help Scotland re-assert its own international presence, its 'continuing independence from England'.<sup>5</sup> In the first joint meeting at the New Sorbonne, an image of Joan of Arc, with her Scots Army, was issued to each attendee, carrying with it connotations of deep-rooted hostility towards England, both nations' old enemy. The drawing by John Duncan, titled *The Way to Rheims* – a subject which was suggested to Duncan by Andrew Lang who wrote a corresponding story 'A Monk of Fife' –<sup>6</sup> also appeared in *The Evergreen* (Figure 2.1) which too celebrated French links to Scotland. Drawing on the styles and symbolism associated with France could help undercut the cultural centralisation and integration in Britain that Geddes and others were so keen to resist.

Scotland also had other cultural connections in the period, many of which were explicitly celebrated. There was an interaction between Scottish cultural nationalism and nationalism in India, which is increasingly being acknowledged on account of work by Murdo Macdonald and Bashabi Fraser.<sup>7</sup> Geddes was keen to suggest Scandinavian links, hoping Scotland could become 'One of the European Powers of Culture', 'like Norway',<sup>8</sup> a telling example considering Norway was also undergoing its own cultural (and political) nationalist movement, ultimately resulting in the dissolution of the Norway-Sweden Union in 1905. In a similar vein, William Sharp used a quotation from the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* for an epigraph in *From The Hills of Dream* (1896). Geddes also commends the 'living and fruitful' 'intercourse with the

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<sup>4</sup> Patrick Geddes: *The French Connection*, ed. by Frances Fowle and Belinda Thomson (Oxford: White Cockade Publishing, 2004); Sian Reynolds, *Paris-Edinburgh: Cultural Connections in the Belle Epoque* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Siobhan Talbott, 'British Commercial Interests on the French Atlantic Coast, c. 1560-1713', *Historical Research*, 85.229 (2012), 394-409 (p. 405).

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Patrick Geddes to R. E. Muirhead, 4 December 1928 [Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh: E2208.54].

<sup>7</sup> Murdo Macdonald, 'Celticism and Internationalism in the circle of Patrick Geddes', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6.2 (2005), 69-83; Murdo Macdonald, 'Patrick Geddes and Cultural Renewal Through Visual Art: Scotland-India-Japan', in *Patrick Geddes: "By Leaves We Live"*, ed. by Kiyoshi Okutsu and others (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2005), pp. 46-58; *A Meeting of Two Minds: Geddes-Tagore Letters*, ed. by Bashabi Fraser (Edinburgh: Word Power Books, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Victor V. Branford and Patrick Geddes, 'Prefatory Note', *The Evergreen*, 2 (1895), 8.

Netherlands', one that was touched on in Chapter 1 with *Catriona*.<sup>9</sup> As I have shown, there had also been paranationalist associations to support Garibaldi, 'the William Wallace of Italy',<sup>10</sup> in the 1860s, which was also mentioned in Chapter 1. As I will show, there were also connections to Egyptian cultures, not to mention the close identification with the Celtic nations, namely Ireland, which will be further drawn out in the following three chapters. Scotland was certainly 'emplotted within the world system' in the late nineteenth century.

Geddes, for one, was particularly interested in generally enhancing Scotland's position in international colloquy. In a letter to R. E. Muirhead, the first chairman of the National Party for Scotland, Geddes voiced a belief in 'international initiatives of collaboration': 'without waiting for a separate Scottish representative at Geneva, like the present Irish one, why not, before that, go further, and organise true and vital centres in the leading countries'.<sup>11</sup> Geddes's largely apolitical vision of Scottish nationalism could be furthered by developing international connections (although, in this letter, he expresses a desire for 'Scottish national policy' too).<sup>12</sup>

While many of these cultural connections outlined above require greater examination, to demonstrate just how 'emplotted' Scottish cultural nationalism was in the late nineteenth century, this chapter will focus on two national cultures that were yoked with Scottish culture in the period: Japanese and Belgian. These two have been selected for three reasons. First, performing cultural yokings with Belgium and Japan helped 'other' Scotland – distance it from the metropole – as they were frequently associated with barbarity and orientalism, respectively. The Belgian Revival, in particular, was a key connection as it provided a close parallel for Scotland to model, as well as ideas and styles to inspire and strengthen the Scots Renaissance. The Japan cultural connection also had a particular role as it reflected a blossoming Scottish industrial and imperial connection; this cultural yoking allowed Scotland to both

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Colin Kidd, 'Sentiment, Race and Revival: Scottish identities in the aftermath of Enlightenment', in *A Union of Multiple Identities*, ed. by Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 110-126 (p. 118).

<sup>11</sup> [CRC: E2208.54].

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

distance and distinguish itself from the metropole but also to preserve some ties, which was a key element of Scottish cultural nationalism. Second, there has been little consideration of Scottish cultural nationalism's relationship to Japan or Belgium. Work has certainly been done on the reception of Japanese culture in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow, but these considerations do not highlight that this reception was linked to Scottish cultural nationalism. Third, Japanese and Belgian cultures were particularly involved in the discourse of Decadence. The *fin-de-siècle* enthusiasm for the Orient and the Belgian Revivalists' anti-materiality were two particularly loathed aspects of Decadent, degenerate culture for those who held to progressivist narratives – a stance embodied for instance by Nordau. Belgium in particular was maligned as 'savage' and, like many cultural nationalists in Scotland, Belgian cultural nationalists embraced the label of 'barbarity' as a means of resistance, to authenticate its difference from its larger neighbour (France). Similarly, Japan's 'Oriental' traditional culture was often encoded, both positively and negatively, as antithetical to industrial progress. Leela Ghandi has argued, several 'affective communities' were born at the *fin de siècle*: those on the margins within Britain were increasingly looking for solidarity with sub-cultures elsewhere. In Scotland, this 'politics of friendship',<sup>13</sup> as Ghandi terms it, is particularly apparent – in many ways, it fuelled the Scots Renaissance.<sup>14</sup>

Initially, the chapter will address the second research question, on the extent of the ties between Decadence and Scottish cultural nationalism. By building on some of the discussions in the Introduction, it will examine how these cross-cultural associations that resisted narratives of civilisation can be considered Decadent acts. The chapter will then examine the types of cultural yokings Scottish cultural nationalists engaged in. These discussions will demonstrate that the Scottish movement's inter-cultural relations reflect a particular socio-political context. The chapter will also examine how common these cultural yokings were across Scotland in

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<sup>13</sup> Leela Ghandi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin de Siecle Radicalism and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion on Scottish and Irish affective communities (or 'fratritism') over the long eighteenth century, see Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 235-258.

the period; they were not simply specialist interests but trends in a nationwide movement that crossed art and literature. Furthermore, how *fin-de-siècle* Scottish art paved the way for Modernism will be considered here, in the context of both *fin-de-siècle* Scotland's interactions with Belgium (which prefigured MacDiarmid's writings on Scotland and Belgium) and Japan (through the Glasgow School's proto-Modernist *japonisme*).

## 2.2 The Decadent Savage and Inter-Cultural Relations

To understand the yoking of styles and tropes associated with Belgian and Japanese cultures with Scottish culture, we must grasp the discourse of barbarity in the period. As was noted in the introduction to this thesis, Decadence could be closely associated with barbarity – both terms were means of labelling and maligning those who challenged, or were felt to be antithetical to, enlightened improvement. For instance, Max Nordau complained that Decadence was the 'enemy of progress',<sup>15</sup> the 'unchaining of the beast of man' (p. 5), and believed that the Aesthetes and the Decadents 'gathered under their banner [the] refuse of civilization' (p. 337). Decadence could embody the anxiety over the 'relapse into barbarism' that was felt in the period.<sup>16</sup> Regenia Gagnier has alternatively argued that 'the Decadent was the opposite of the primitive, or Noble Savage: urban, introspective, individuated, enervated' and she claims that 'Decadence and Progress could be the same thing'.<sup>17</sup> Gagnier, however is writing here on a particular type of Decadence; not all forms of Decadence were opposed to the image of the primitive or savage, as Baudelaire's writings, which are considered below, particularly reveal.

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<sup>15</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1895), p. 560 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>16</sup> For more on this relapse, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 229-230.

<sup>17</sup> Regenia Gagnier, 'The Victorian *fin de siècle* and Decadence', in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*, ed. by Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 30-49 (pp. 33, 36).





Figure 2.2: Edward T. Reed, *Britannia à la Beardsley*, illustration for *Punch Almanack*, 1895

This discourse of Decadent barbarity interacted with cultural representations of inter-national power dynamics. Often, the 'barbarous' were taken to be those who stood against hegemonic notions of enlightened amelioration and were equated with colonial subjects – indeed, Decadence was frequently associated with imperial demise, as it was believed to be challenging progressivist narratives or supporting the 'primitive' in some way.<sup>18</sup> This is revealed in Edward T. Reed's *Britannia à la Beardsley* (Figure 2.2). Here, through mimicking the Decadent style of Beardsley, the British national, imperial figure is represented as grotesque and dark haired, a feature which was most commonly associated with Southern European, Catholic countries while fair hair tended to be associated with the supposedly more 'civilised', evident in E. vom Baumgarten's 'Civilisation' (Figure 2.3). Furthermore, the Union flag on Britannia's shield is thorny and various objects take on a subversive character.

<sup>18</sup> For more on Decadence and empire, see Norman Vance, 'Decadence and the subversion of empire', in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789-1945*, ed. by Catharine Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 110-124.

The image is a critique of how Decadence 'undermined British nationalism' and posed a threat to its imperial ascendancy.<sup>19</sup>

Contesting the Decadents often involved comparing them with less 'civilised' nationalities and, consequently, the discourse of Decadence became associated with inter-cultural power dynamics. One of the ways Decadent writing responded to this was to sympathise with, and reclaim, the colonial subject and other cultures on the margins, to perform the 'politics of friendship', creating solidarities to counter their critics and their narratives of stadial development. When we look at Baudelaire's and others' work, it is clear that there was space in the discourse of Decadence to reclaim 'the primitive' that existed elsewhere – Decadent writings could at least attempt to reach out to those that imperial modernity sought to marginalise internationally. Although Baudelaire's writings should not be taken as a definition of Decadence, they do reveal that Decadence could, in some of its manifestations, reclaim the legitimacy of 'the savage' through the 'politics of friendship'. It is necessary to grasp this, in order to understand that these cross-cultural yokings that reclaimed marginalised peoples were, in certain ways, Decadent acts.

Baudelaire's 'Further Notes on Edgar Poe' (1857) is remarkable for at times subtly, and at times outspokenly, challenging stadialist narratives. Baudelaire's essay questions the idea that the 'literature of the decadence'<sup>20</sup> is degenerate by exposing the degeneracy of enlightened, 'civilised' culture and reclaiming the supposed 'savage' as the more sophisticated and cultured being. At the beginning of the essay, Baudelaire invokes several binaries: master/slave, academic/barbarian, empire/colony. With each of these, he turns the power relation on its head. The academic critic, who complains about the 'literature of the decadence', is mocked in the essay, not only for their 'flatulent yawn[s]' (p. 93), but because *their* taste is too savage to understand the literature they scorn:

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<sup>19</sup> Bridget Jane Elliot, 'Aubrey Beardsley's Images of New Women in the Yellow Book', [unpublished doctoral thesis, University College London, 1985], p. 271.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1995), p. 93 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

Whenever I hear this anathema thundering in the air [...] I am invariably seized with a desire to reply, 'Do you take me for a barbarian like yourselves? Do you really think me capable of taking my pleasures as drearily as you do?' (p. 93)

Here, Baudelaire styles the tastes of the 'academic' (p. 94) critic as barbaric, in much the same way as Maurice Barrès would do (to Nordau's consternation) by representing the supposedly 'civilised' as the true barbarians.<sup>21</sup> Baudelaire heralds Poe as the corrective to this culture – 'the writer who, in the *Colloquy of Monos and Una*, discharges torrents of scorn and disgust upon democracy, progress and *civilization*' (p. 95), his italics highlighting his disdain for the idea. Baudelaire's essay embodies a form of Decadence that interrogated the idea of progress, a development from the likes of proto-Decadent Schopenhauer who too critiqued narratives of historical progress,<sup>22</sup> which also became common towards the end of the nineteenth century. E. von Baumgarten's *Civilisation* (Figure 2.3) is a clear expression of the cynicism towards notions of 'civilisation' that grew internationally in the 1890s. In this representation, civilisation comes at the cost of great death and destruction to the majority while the two fair-haired 'civilised' citizens ignore it.

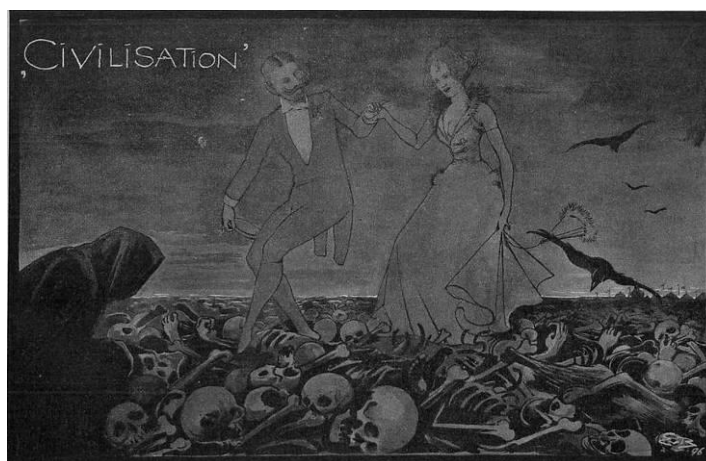


Figure 2.3: E. von Baumgarten, *Civilisation*, illustration for *Jugend*, 1896

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<sup>21</sup> Nordau, pp. 311-312.

<sup>22</sup> Robert A. Nisbit, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), pp. 319-320.

To counter 'civilisation' and stadialist thinking, Baudelaire celebrates the sophistication of colonial subjects, who were often the victims of such ideas. He heralds the 'true greatness of the idle races!' in their shelter from obsessing over 'material perfection' (p. 94). Borrowing from the tradition of representing the 'noble savage', a term coined by Dryden and often associated with Rousseau, Baudelaire celebrates and romanticises the supposedly barbarous. However, Baudelaire's essay goes further in that he supports the displacement of 'civilised' culture by performing a willed return to a 'barbarous' state, something which Rousseau, for instance, could not sanction.<sup>23</sup> Baudelaire discusses the importance of returning to a pre-Enlightenment period, which he believes the 'savage' races embody. He narrates the revival of a 'primeval tendency [...] this primitive, irresistible force is man's natural perversity' (p. 96) and he exposes how favourable he finds it. He prefers the 'nation[s] lacking all the ingenious inventions which dispense the individual of heroism' (p. 99). Although he can authenticate the stadialist representation of 'primitive' peoples, describing them as simple and 'childlike' (p. 100), his attempt to reclaim the sophistication of these traits is bound up with a desire to de-stabilise the civilised-savage binary: the 'savage' is not the opposite of the 'civilised' and, in many ways, the savage is the more sophisticated. 'Primitive' cultures are preferable to the race of 'bourgeois mediocrity' (p. 101) which is embodied by 'the inventor of the ethics of the shop-counter, the hero of an age dedicated to materialism' (p. 100) – a critique Symonds would later replay when he called merchants and money-makers 'the degenerates of civilisation'.<sup>24</sup> Baudelaire summarises: the word 'Savages' 'looks like an act of injustice' (p. 101).

Was Baudelaire trying to purposefully undermine colonialism? It is unlikely. The Decadents, largely, were returning to periods and conditions which stood for 'lost truths',<sup>25</sup> and a pure art, which their own society, underpinned by Enlightenment liberalism, inhibited. However, such willed returns to the past were highly akin to

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<sup>23</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, trans. by Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin, 1984), pp. 153-154.

<sup>24</sup> (cited in) Murray G. H. Pittcock, *Spectrum of Decadence: The Literature of the 1890s* (London, Routledge, 1993), p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

those performed by colonials resisting imperialism. For many postcolonial theorists, the native has to return to their pre-colonial history, to their 'lost innocence',<sup>26</sup> in order to reject their settler's occupation. In this 'triumph of barbarism',<sup>27</sup> the native becomes what 'the white man wants [them] to be'<sup>28</sup> but, in doing so, realises that 'there was nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory and solemnity', writes Frantz Fanon.<sup>29</sup> This was a feature shared by the discourses of Decadence and imperial resistance, and these two concepts could draw strength from each other.

This Decadent recovery of the supposedly 'barbaric' was not limited to Baudelaire; several figures associated with Decadence were keen to reclaim the 'uncivilised'. What Baudelaire's essay reveals is that this reclamation could have ties with inter-national relations and could stimulate a 'politics of friendship', where identifying with other cultures styled as 'barbarous' could support defending the supposedly 'degraded' closer to home and create a counter-hegemony. The Decadent desire for cross-cultural solidarity is also apparent with the likes of Oscar Wilde's Vivian identifying more with the art of the Orient than the 'degraded race' he was surrounded by,<sup>30</sup> a comment elaborated on in the 'Celtic Japonisme' section of this chapter.

This discussion has important implications for a consideration of Scottish cultural nationalism at the *fin de siècle*. Indeed, Baudelaire wrote: 'I far prefer the cult of Teutates to that of Mammon, and the priest who offers up to the cruel extorter of Human sacrifice victims who die *honourably*, victims who *take it upon themselves to die*' (p. 100). Here, Baudelaire asserts his preference for the 'savage' Celtic cult to the 'civilised' Christian as well as his fascination with druidic sacrifice and dying honourably, a central traditional Highland custom. Cultural nationalists in Scotland were increasingly trying to rekindle an enthusiasm for such Highland and Celtic

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<sup>26</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Preface', in *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1967), pp. 7-26 (p. 18).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 178.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>30</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Plays, Prose Writings and Poems* (London: Everyman's Library, 1991), p. 80.

cultures, which – as in colonial resistance – involved embracing ‘its own critique [of barbarity] in order to assert its authenticity’ and difference.<sup>31</sup> Like Baudelaire, who found solidarity with ‘the other’ elsewhere, Scottish cultural nationalists at the *fin de siècle* were looking to other cultures for inspiration and yoking some of their cultural tropes to form a counter-hegemony, to distance (although not divorce) Scotland from the metropole. By performing cross-cultural ‘triumph[s] of barbarism’, Scottish cultural nationalists were aligning themselves with Decadent attempts to resist or complicate stadial narratives of improvement. Not only did Belgian and Japanese cultures have their own ties to Decadence in this period, the general styling of a ‘politics of friendship’ to resist narratives of ‘civilisation’ is consistent with varieties of Decadence.

Like Scottish cultural nationalists, several Belgian Revivalists were too looking to the past and less ‘civilised’ culture to revive their distinct nationality which was increasingly being marginalised. Through a cross-cultural association with Belgium, Scottish cultural nationalists could lend strength to their resistance to stadialism, creating a counter-hegemony that could support the ‘triumph of barbarism’ while getting inspiration from the Belgians’ ideas, subjects and styles.

### **2.3 *La Jeune Belgique* and Scotland’s Celtic Revival**

If the Belgian cultural Renaissance from 1880 to 1920 is ever considered in the context of Scottish literature, it is through Hugh MacDiarmid’s writings.<sup>32</sup> In the first volume of the *Scottish Chapbook*, from August 1922, MacDiarmid uses Belgium as a model for how Scotland can develop its own cultural revival. He writes:

What Belgium did, Scotland can do [...] Let the exponents of [...] Scottish Literature to-day make common cause as the young Belgian writers [...] did in *La Jeune Belgique* and elsewhere, and

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<sup>31</sup> Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism*, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup> Sasha Bru, ‘The Prism of Propaganda: Hugh MacDiarmid’s Modernism and the Belgian Literary Revival’, *Scottish Literary Review*, 3.1 (2011), 43-62 and Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918-1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 16.

the next decade or two will see a Scottish Renaissance as swift and irresistible as was the Belgian Revival between 1880 and 1910.<sup>33</sup>

This quotation appears in the first volume of the *Chapbook*, the same volume in which MacDiarmid critiques the Celtic Renaissance and Scottish literature of the 1890s. He writes that 'for several generations Scottish Literature has neither seen nor heard nor understood what was taking place around it [...] Scottish writers have been terrified even to appear inconstant to established conventions'.<sup>34</sup> He sees William Sharp, the Celtic Revivalist who contributed to (and was involved in the management of) *The Evergreen* and Patrick Geddes and Colleagues' Celtic Library, as the embodiment of this tendency; Sharp was an exponent of 'Old Romance' Scotland that suffocated a real Scottish revival of modernity and internationalism.<sup>35</sup> What MacDiarmid overlooks here is that it was Sharp, the supposed inhibitor of a true Scottish Revival, who pioneered the idea of using *la jeune Belgique* as a model for a Scottish national revival thirty years previously.

What critics often misunderstand is that, in his rejection of late nineteenth-century culture, MacDiarmid was not simply 'circumventing an inherited national inferiority', as Scott Lyall believes.<sup>36</sup> Instead, MacDiarmid experienced his own anxiety of influence: he curtailed his indebtedness to previous work to foreground his own originality.<sup>37</sup> It is important that Scottish Literature addresses this anxiety of the Modernists. While other critical cultures have successfully traced the emergence of Modernism back to the 1890s, Scottish Literature has struggled to; one of the ways this can be done is by interrogating some of MacDiarmid's and his contemporaries' self-aggrandising claims and tracing their ideas back to the nineteenth century.

Sharp's reputation has suffered due to critical attention almost entirely focussing on his 'Fiona Macleod' writings, which MacDiarmid most likely had in mind

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<sup>33</sup> (cited in) McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism*, p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> (cited in) Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Modernism and Nationalism: Literature and Society in Scotland 1918-1939* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Studies, 2004), p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Scott Lyall, *Hugh MacDiarmid's Poetry and Politics of Place: Imagining a Scottish Republic* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2006), p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed examination of the various ways writers attempted to appease the anxiety of influence, see Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

when he wrote his article for the *Chapbook*. As will be discussed when treating the Fiona works and Sharp's split identity in Chapter 3, Sharp could be incredibly contradictory: at times, his writings contribute towards marginalising the Celt and are defeatist over the Celtic cause while, at others, they can challenge 'civilisation' – Yeats, for one, believed that Fiona held 'the keys to the gates of the primeval world, which shut behind more successful races, when they plunged into material progress'.<sup>38</sup> For this chapter, it is necessary to note that there is a thread of resistance to centralisation and marginalisation in Sharp's oeuvre, which is revealed in his belief that 'London is so overwhelming provincial, because it is the centre towards which the provincial mind gravitates'.<sup>39</sup> Confronting the metropole and 'civilisation' underpins Sharp's enthusiasm for Belgian culture. Through studying Sharp's interest in the Belgian Revival (as well as the Glasgow School's) I reveal how Belgian national culture, which Sharp notes was also labelled as 'backward' in the period – confirmed by Nordau's styling of Maeterlinck's work as 'utterly childish idiotically-incoherent' Decadent mysticism,<sup>40</sup> was used to support the Celtic Revival and Scottish cultural nationalism. Furthermore, what the Belgian Revival offered was not only a comparative which the Celtic Revivalists could find fellowship but also a literary and visual vocabulary to resist incorporation – the subjects and styles adopted by certain Belgian figures were embraced by Sharp and the Glasgow School to support their efforts. This section of the chapter will examine how the two nations were compared in the period and then demonstrate how a cross-cultural 'triumph of barbarism' was performed through sharing and yoking visual and literary styles.

Criticism needs to acknowledge that Sharp played an important role in the UK's engagement with the Belgian Revival, being one of the first main importers of Maeterlinck into the British Isles. Previously, it has been understood that these writings came into the UK via Ireland (Katharine Worth argues that it 'was always a

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<sup>38</sup> (cited in) Willy Maley, 'Away with the Faeries (or, It's Grimm up North): Yeats and Scotland', *Journal of Irish Scottish Studies*, 1.1 (2007), 161-178 (p. 170).

<sup>39</sup> William Sharp, 'The Irish Muse – I', *The North American Review*, 179 (1904), 685-697 (p. 697).

<sup>40</sup> Nordau, p. 227.



tale of three cities – Dublin, Paris and London’)<sup>41</sup> but this understanding ignores the importance of Scotland. It also overlooks the Belgian cultural nationalist movement and the fact that many of the writings of *la jeune Belgique* intended to resist the metropole and complicate civilisation-barbarity discourse – a core reason why several Scots styled a cultural ‘politics of friendship’ with it. Sharp prided himself on being the first major critic and enthusiast of the Belgian Revival. In a letter to Catharine Janvier he comments on his article in *The Academy* which concerns ‘a subject wherein I am (I suppose) the only specialist among English men of letters – the Belgian Literary Renaissance since 1880’.<sup>42</sup> He certainly wasn’t the first critic: William Archer, a Scot, wrote the first article in English on Maeterlinck (1891),<sup>43</sup> followed by Hall Caine’s introduction to Gérard Harry’s English Translation of *La Princess Maleine* and *The Intruder* (1892), which Oscar Wilde was originally requested to do.<sup>44</sup> However, Sharp’s article in *The Academy* shows a far greater knowledge of the field. He himself dismisses Archer’s and Caine’s pieces, finding them ‘inadequate’ and questions their familiarity with the scope of the Belgian Literary Revival.<sup>45</sup> It is worth noting that these four men were all born in ‘Celtic’ nations: Archer and Sharp were Scottish, Caine was Manx, and Wilde was Irish. Furthermore, it is likely that Sharp was introduced to these texts by Edith Rinder, who would become closely involved in Geddes’s Celtic Revival project and looked to other cultures for solidarity. Not only did she produce a collection of Breton Romances and folk tales for the Celtic Library, *The Shadow of Arvor* (1986), she translated several Belgian Revival texts that were compiled and published as *The Massacre of the Innocents: and Other Tales* (1895) – which are discussed in more detail below – after receiving consent from Maeterlinck.<sup>46</sup> The Belgian movement was clearly appealing to those on the fringes.

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<sup>41</sup> Katharine Worth, *The Irish Drama of Europe: from Yeats to Beckett* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978), p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from William Sharp to Catharine Janvier, 12 August 1893, *The William Sharp "Fiona Macleod" Archive*, <[http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Projects/Sharp\\_Mcleod/1893.pdf](http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Projects/Sharp_Mcleod/1893.pdf)> [accessed 18 November 2014].

<sup>43</sup> William Archer, ‘A Pessimist Playwright’, *Fortnightly Review*, 50.297 (1891), 346-354.

<sup>44</sup> Katharine Worth, *Oscar Wilde* (Houndmills: Macmillan Education, 1983), p. 54.

<sup>45</sup> William Sharp, ‘*The Princess Maleine* and *The Intruder*’, *The Academy*, 1037 (1892), 270-272.

<sup>46</sup> William Sharp, ‘A Note on the Belgian Renaissance’, *The Chap-Book*, 4 (1895), 149-157 (p. 153) [future references to this volume are given in brackets after quotations].

Sharp's desire to disseminate knowledge about the Revival is reflected in the fact that he went on to write four other essays on the Belgian Revival, review the work associated with it and execute several translations. In the second volume of *The Evergreen*, which Geddes intended to distribute in Brussels,<sup>47</sup> Sharp included his translation of 'The Night-Comers', by Charles van Lerberghe and, with it, a note that gives some basic context for the Belgian Revival. The *Glasgow Herald* noted that Sharp was doing 'good service in opening what is practically a new field for readers in this country'.<sup>48</sup> His most important article on Belgium, where he reveals his cultural nationalism, is 'A Note on the Belgian Renaissance' (1895). Here, Sharp highlights that the Belgian Revival was a means of resisting cultural centralisation towards Paris. He writes:

A group of writers, all young in heart and mind, if not youthful in point of age, cohered in a common bond: the bond of a national, independent, original literature. The whip of Baudelaire, if it had lashed some into servility, had strung others into revolt. It was not now a question of the Franco-Belgian, but of the Belgian. (p. 152).

For Sharp, "'Young Belgium" is [...] concentrated in the effort to withstand Paris' and to resist any political attempt from France or Germany to appropriate their nation.<sup>49</sup> Baudelaire's critiques of Belgian culture as 'slavish' (p. 150) and parochial had nurtured scorn for Belgium in France and ignited a new movement in Belgium; Sharp notes that Belgians were increasingly considered 'barbarian'.<sup>50</sup> Many of the works of the movement explicitly reflected this nationalism: Maeterlinck's 'The Massacre of the Innocents' (originally published in *Pleiade* in May 1886 and translated by Rinder) is set in a Flemish-speaking Nazareth, infiltrated by a Spanish army who kill the Flemish-speaking children; it is clearly concerned with the loss of Flemish culture. In Sharp's view, Belgian cultural nationalists were trying to rekindle their 'distinctively Teutonic

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<sup>47</sup> Rough notes by Patrick Geddes relating to *The Evergreen*, c.1895-1896 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/3].

<sup>48</sup> 'Miscellaneous Books', *Glasgow Herald*, 15 November 1895, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> William Sharp, 'La Jeune Belgique', *The Nineteenth Century*, 34 (September 1893), 416-436 (p. 418); the desire to 'withstand' Paris is akin to Geddes's attempt to 'withstand the tremendous centralizing power of the metropolis of London', see Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), p. 249.

<sup>50</sup> Sharp, 'La Jeune', p. 416.

side' (p. 156). The national divide between the Teutonic and non-Teutonic in Belgium invites comparisons with Scotland but, while the Scots and the Irish were trying to distance their racial heritage from Teutonism, Belgian cultural nationalists were identifying more with it. Despite the racial disparity, Sharp uses this discussion on Belgium and its relationship to the metropole to inject feeling into Scottish and Irish nationalism, by drawing out comparisons between the two. Like Belgium, Sharp notes that Scotland and Ireland were neighbours with larger powers and, consequently, felt pressure to incorporate into the larger culture or face being marginalised. Sharp believes that in the mid-nineteenth century 'Celtic Irish and Celtic Scots obscured rather than obtruded their Celticism' (p. 151), something which had to change. The essay suggests that he still believes a centralising force is evident in the UK in the 1890s; he writes: 'As the Londoner smiles when he hears "the provincial" (whether from Edinburgh or Dublin or the darkest of the lost shires) speak of "society", so the Parisian man of letters condescended towards any new Belgian poet or novelist' (p. 150). Here, Sharp refers to the London-centric force in present tense, but the Paris-centric in past; while the Belgians had achieved cultural independence, Ireland and Scotland still had work to do.

Belgium provided a useful example for Sharp: unlike many other nations in the late nineteenth century that were pursuing political independence, Belgium was already independent and (for Sharp) was simply seeking cultural autonomy and respect, to resist further marginalisation. This model would have appealed to the various cultural nationalists and Home Rule activists in Scotland who did not want to jeopardise their position in the British Empire but sought cultural, and to a certain degree, political autonomy. The fact that Belgium, and Japan, were nurturing nascent Empires is also important: while Ireland was mainly identifying with colonies, such as India, several Scottish cultural nationalists were enthusiastic about identifying with imperial nations, reflecting how they imagined their nation – this was particularly the case with Japan, as will be demonstrated in the next section of this chapter. Furthermore, Belgium was an appropriate target for cultural links since Scotland had

once had close connections to Flanders. There was a conservator of Scottish privileges in Flanders in the fifteenth century and there is a great deal of Scottish inheritance in the place names of Bruges – most notably, St Giles’s Church (Sint-Gilliskerk).<sup>51</sup> In numerous ways, it was an ideal country to style a cultural ‘politics of friendship’ with.

It was not simply in his essays that Sharp outlined comparisons between Belgian and Celtic cultures and suggested how they might draw strength from one another. He also yoked the two cultures in his own literary writings and even in his translations. The National Library of Scotland houses two of his translations of Belgian plays: *Les Aveugles* by Maeterlinck and *Le Barbare*, by Auguste Jenart (the only known English language translation of the play, although unfinished).<sup>52</sup> Sharp translates the title of *Les Aveugles* not as ‘The Blind’ as others have since but as ‘The Blind Folk’. This is significant as the word ‘folk’ in the late nineteenth century often referred to people on the margins (indeed, Sharp uses the word ‘folk’ frequently in his Celtic writings) and, through Herder and the Grimm brothers, it became closely associated with the national unification and cultural definition.<sup>53</sup> By using the word in this context, he could well be subtly suggesting a parallel between the lost despairing blind people, on a northern island, and the Celts and other marginalised cultures.

Maeterlinck and Jenart had a profound impact on one of Sharp’s most ambitious publications: *Vistas*. In order to understand *Vistas* fully, Jenart’s *The Barbarian* (1891) must be considered as Sharp frequently uses quotations from the play as epigraphs in *Vistas*. Together, the two works achieve a cross-cultural ‘triumph of barbarism’.

*The Barbarian* can be read as a cultural nationalist play that embodies Sartre’s ‘triumph of barbarism’ and the Decadent savage. Most likely drawing from one of the foundation texts of Belgian Revival literature, Charles de Coster’s *Legend of Ulenspiegel* (1867) – where the protagonist carries his father’s ashes around his neck

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<sup>51</sup> For more on the historical Scottish-Belgian connections, see James Grant, *The Scottish Soldiers of Fortune* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1889), pp. 142-172.

<sup>52</sup> William Sharp, Manuscripts and typescripts of dramas [National Library of Scotland: MS 8776].

<sup>53</sup> For a summary of Herder’s ideas on nationhood and the ‘volk’, see Robert Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School: J. G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 12-18.

and they beat against his heart, Jenart's protagonist, Rynel de Ronçort, carries his ancestors' souls in his body. He states:

Innumerable anterior lives are present in me: I am overcome by things of the future: I know Eternity. Am I not the Irrevocable?<sup>54</sup>

The play interrogates the idea of stadialist development as several of the characters are portrayed as 'barbarians' whose racial memories and heritage return to occupy and disrupt the present. This barbarism is evident when the female character, Siria, contemplates how she can win Rynel and exposes his apparent homosexual desires:

Siria: He alone is beautiful. Why does he prefer this Nurh? And thou also?  
The Doctor: She is a virgin.  
Siria: Virgin....Six thousand years defile her.<sup>55</sup>

The autonomous self is questioned here; the characters carry their ancestry and, in doing so, the play presents the barbarity that still exists in society which can challenge a 'civilised' order. Maeterlinck uttered similar ideas in *The Treasure of the Humble*, stating that the dead continue to live 'in ourselves'.<sup>56</sup> These assertions of ancestral memory are important, namely because this was a period when the Belgian nationality, like the Celtic nationalities, was increasingly portrayed as marginal and 'barbaric' – wedded to a past 'stage'. Parisians described incoming Belgians as an 'invasion des barbares', Sharp notes: 'he is a Barbarian, a foreigner, a Teutonic dreamer, a tiresome person whose chosen tongue happens to be French, but whose mind is Flemish, whose manner is Walloon: a mediocrity [...] a Belgian mediocrity'.<sup>57</sup> Akin to Sartre's and Fanon's 'triumph of barbarism' concept, several Belgians were internalising their difference and returning to their 'barbaric' national voice as a rhetorical tool, in order to authenticate their difference from the metropole. Characters in Jenart's play

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<sup>54</sup> [NLS: MS 8776].

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* Similar quotes appear throughout: 'Rynel: Those whom I love are within myself. I recognise them by their fragrances, mystic lilies whose whiteness is flesh of my flesh. Thus it is I am so pale, so wan. Oh, banish life, assassin of sweet dreams!'; 'Rynel: I carry away her soul in my soul.'

<sup>56</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Treasure of the Humble*, trans. by Alfred Sutro (London: George Allen, 1902), pp. 142-143.

<sup>57</sup> Sharp, 'La Jeune', p. 416.

frequently justify such 'savage' images; for example, The Father responds to accusations of savagery by stating: 'Savage, yes. I believe terror is the original source of the emotions, and i'faith, I seek it'.<sup>58</sup> It is apt that Sharp described the play as 'a poetic version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*'.<sup>59</sup> like Stevenson's novella, the play seeks to interrogate 'civilisation' and reclaim supposedly barbarous peoples.

When the above context is taken into consideration, it becomes clear why Sharp quotes from *Le Barbare* so frequently. Sharp himself spoke out against the so-called 'civilising factor'<sup>60</sup> that destroyed Highland communities and, instead, like Jenart, pursued 'the old barbaric emotion'.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, like Jenart's protagonist, Sharp too believed that previous lives existed in him, confessing 'we all hark back strangely at times'.<sup>62</sup> This side of Sharp is revealed in his novella *The Gypsy-Christ* (published in 1895), written eight days after first encountering Maeterlinck's work, where the protagonist (who is subject to the curse of his ancestor) is named Fanshawe – one of Sharp's pseudonyms (W. S. Fanshawe). The central themes of *Le Barbare* – disrupting the 'teleology of civility' and reclaiming ancestral inheritance –<sup>63</sup> spoke well to Sharp's work and ideas.

In many ways, *Vistas* (1894) is Sharp's greatest achievement and he himself was keen to assert its significance. In a letter to Herbert S. Stone, Sharp quotes from his friend George Cotterell who said that Sharp's 'The Tower of Silence', which was rewritten and published in *Vistas* as 'A Northern Night',<sup>64</sup> was 'the most remarkable and significant production the so-called Décadent or Fin-de-Siècle school'.<sup>65</sup> Regardless of whether Cotterell said this or not – it is plausible considering the praise

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<sup>58</sup> [NLS: MS 8776].

<sup>59</sup> Sharp, 'La Jeune', p. 433.

<sup>60</sup> William Sharp, *The Winged Destiny and Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1904), p. 273.

<sup>61</sup> William Sharp, *The Washer of the Ford: and other Legendary Moralities* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1896), p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, p. 188.

<sup>63</sup> Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* pp. 17, 60-61.

<sup>64</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from William Sharp to Herbert S. Stone, 22 December 1894, *The William Sharp "Fiona Macleod" Archive*  
<[http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Projects/Sharp\\_Mcleod/1894\\_finalJuly2006.pdf](http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Projects/Sharp_Mcleod/1894_finalJuly2006.pdf)>

he gives *Vistas* in his review in *The Academy* –<sup>66</sup> it is significant that Sharp was keen to associate his work with Decadence as in many ways *Vistas* is in tune with Baudelaire's conception of Decadence. When considered alongside *Le Barbare*, *Vistas* demonstrates a cross-cultural 'triumph of barbarism'.

*Vistas* consists of eleven short prose dramas, or dramatic interludes, all very clearly inspired by Maeterlinck's short prose dramas. Sharp defends himself, partially, against claims of imitation in his Dedication, stating that he wrote two of the pieces ('A Northern Night' and 'The Passing of Lilith') 'anterior to the fortunate hour when I came for the first time upon "La Princesse Maleine" and "L'Intruse"'.<sup>67</sup> His diary suggests otherwise. In an entry from 1891, he states that he wrote 'A Northern Night' the day immediately after reading his first encounter with Maeterlinck's work: *La Princesse Maleine* and *Les Aveugles* (2 October 1891).<sup>68</sup> He did not initially intend to publish all of these works in *Vistas* or even under his own name: 'The Black Madonna', for instance, appeared in *The Pagan Review* under 'W. S. Fanshawe' in 1892.<sup>69</sup>

Several of the prose dramas in *Vistas* are concerned with recovering the margins and performing the 'triumph of barbarity'. *Vistas*, like *Le Barbare* and the Celtic Revival, is in many ways 'complicit in a discourse of primitivism'<sup>70</sup> by authenticating the idea that those on the margins are 'barbaric' but it nevertheless disrupts the discourse by reclaiming their status. Centre-margin dynamics and images of barbarity in particular appear throughout the collection. In 'A Northern Night', for instance, set in a 'desolate district of Northern Scotland',<sup>71</sup> Malcolm is to be severed from his love, Helda, who intends to marry another. Malcolm asks: 'will he take you away? Will he take you to the South-country?' (p. 66). They meet in a ruined keep, Iorsa Tower, surrounded by the threatening shadows. When they frantically skate away from the shadows, they find out that her lover is dead. In the 'death-menaced

<sup>66</sup> George Cotterell, 'Vistas', *The Academy*, 1139 (1894), 182-183.

<sup>67</sup> William Sharp, *Vistas* (Chicago: Stone and Kimball, 1894), p. 3 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, p. 190.

<sup>69</sup> It should be noted that *The Pagan Review*, strangely, critiques Maeterlinck's works: 'Maurice Maeterlinck – who stabbed himself with a bodkin in *Les Sept Princesses* – has, in *Pelléas and Mélisande*, opened a vein. There is just a chance it is not an artery' (p. 62). This is not entirely surprising considering Sharp was in the habit of purposefully contradicting himself, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>70</sup> Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> William Sharp, *The Pagan Review*, 1 (1892), p. 61.

and death haunted [...] Scottish wilds' (p. 3) that Sharp describes, the 'natives' surprisingly survive the threat of death and it is the centralising force that dies.

Sharp uses Jenart's *Le Barbare* for a number of epigraphs in *Vistas*, usually for dramas that demonstrate the 'triumph of barbarism'. In one, 'The Passion of Pere Hilarion', the Father throws his crucifix into the river, rejecting religion in favour of bodily passion and does so with 'wild gestures and savage violence' (p. 46). *The Black Madonna*, perhaps the best piece, also has a Jenart epigraph and it interrogates the notion of 'civilisation'. It concerns a pagan sacrificial custom: where youths and maidens are slain before the statue of a Black Madonna.<sup>72</sup> After the sacrifice, the chief of the Arab tribesmen, Bihr, remains behind and tries to seduce the statue, drawing on Wilde's 'The Sphinx'; indeed, the Black Madonna is compared to a sphinx. We learn that this Madonna is 'Ashtaroth', one of hell's angels, and after she 'sinks as one who drowns' in his desire (p. 109), the pagan tribesman is crucified. The Madonna figure is exposed as barbaric, and the barbaric tribesman takes on the image of Christ. The civilisation-barbarism binary is reversed. The history of the image of the Black Madonna idea is revealing in this context: Stephen Benko notes that the 'Black Madonna is the ancient earth-goddess converted to Christianity',<sup>73</sup> an image that is half-Christian and half-pagan, that allowed Christianity to fuse its concepts with black pagan idols, to root itself in pagan cultures and gradually displace the old religion. The image of the Black Madonna exposes the 'barbarity' at the core of many Christian ideas and images – an idea Sharp develops in his Fiona Macleod writings, discussed in Chapter 3. Sharp may also have known that the Black Madonna is a symbol of national resistance in Poland (the Black Madonna of Czestochowa), who is associated with their defence against Swedish invasion. By highlighting the barbarity of 'civility', Sharp interrogated the narrative of stadialism and those who would marginalise cultures. Interestingly, the figure of Ashtaroth also appears in Buchan's short story 'The Grove of Ashtaroth' (1912) which too presents a seductive (in this case, Semitic)

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<sup>72</sup> This sacrifice to a goddess may well have been inspired by the opening of J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* on the banks of Lake Nemi, which Sharp strongly appears to have drawn from in other writings, as outlined in Chapters 3.

<sup>73</sup> Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 2004), p. 215.



non-Christianity that threatens rationality and is portrayed as particularly appealing to Lawson, a man of Scottish descent. By continually referencing *Le Barbare* alongside his own pieces that were concerned with reviving barbarity, Sharp attempts to create cross-cultural solidarity between those on the margins.

Not only did Sharp draw from the Belgian Revivalists' ideas but also their theatrical styles, which further yoked Belgian and Celtic cultures. This is evident in Sharp's final major connection with Maeterlinck and the Belgian Revival: the production of one of his own Celtic plays alongside two Maeterlinck plays in 1900. Sharp was the first Chairman of The Stage Society in London and, at the fifth meeting, his play *The House of Usna* (written under the Fiona Macleod pseudonym and encouraged by Yeats, who wanted Fiona to supply work to the Irish theatrical revival)<sup>74</sup> was performed, followed by two short Maeterlinck plays, *The Interior* and *The Death of Tintagiles*. The production was directed by Granville-Barker and overseen by Sharp. Although it was not universally well-received (a reviewer for *The Outlook* stated that the evening 'began in gloom, continued in dejection and ended in despair'),<sup>75</sup> the content and style of *Usna* reflect Sharp's interests in associated cultural nationalisms. The production reveals how Sharp – like the Glasgow School – used styles and ideas that were also used by Belgian Revivalists to help reject the 'bondage of exteriority',<sup>76</sup> as Symons named it – an idea connected to the 'triumph or barbarism' as it further distanced Scottish culture from 'civilised' materiality.

In many ways, the production was an expression of the allied nationalisms of the Belgian and Celtic Revivals, voiced in Sharp's earlier essay. *The House of Usna* is a cultural nationalist play, a call for national unity which eulogises the loss of Celtic nations when they cannot unify. Unlike his several romantic, Ossianic writings, the Ultonian subject matter in *Usna* directly invokes Irish political and historical issues. In the play, Concobar, the High-King of Ireland, wants to make Ireland 'one nation',<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Richard Ellman, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 132.

<sup>75</sup> 'Music and Maeterlinck', *The Outlook*, 5 (May 1900), 434.

<sup>76</sup> Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, ed. by Matthew Creasy (Manchester: Carcanet, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> William Sharp, *The House of Usna* (Portland: Thomas B Mosher, 1903), p. 3 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

after creating many enemies in his own house and elsewhere in Ireland and Scotland. However, Duach, a druid, recites the last words of a prophet, Cathba, who claimed that Ireland will die and its 'soul' will merely exist. Concobar fights this and says that his son Cormac will unite the nation and prevent it from being extinguished: 'He shall save Eiré. The prophecies of Cathba shall be set at naught' (p. 45). However, his son has been killed by Cravetheen, someone on his own side, for supposedly having an affair with his wife. Too many divisions have been engendered by Concobar to develop a 'one nation' Ireland and, consequently, we are told that 'the star of Ireland shall set in blood' (p. 7). The play is a lament for the inability of the Celts to save themselves when they turn against each other; it is only when kingliness transfers to the people, away from divisive rulers, that Ireland will be saved (p. 46). Unlike some of Sharp's other Celtic writings, the passing of the Celt here is not portrayed as inevitable; it is because of their inability to reconcile themselves under a common nationality that the Celts will fade.

Besides being an expression of associated cultural nationalisms, Sharp most likely brought these three plays together as *The House of Usna*, and indeed his other dramas, are indebted to Maeterlinck's and Jenart's theatrical style. The style of these plays lent itself very well to the type of cultural nationalisms being pursued in Scotland and Ireland that sought to complicate Enlightenment narratives of improvement. Yeats believed that 'antimaterialistic images' were needed to counter enlightened culture that prized logical materialism and celebrate 'unadulterated traditional culture' and the Belgian dramas provided such images which influenced Sharp.<sup>78</sup> In the foreword to the play, Sharp states: 'The theatre of Ibsen, and all it stands for, is become outworn as a compelling influence' (p. xxvii). He continues to critique Ibsen's drama as 'more congruous with the method of the mirror that gathers and reveals certain facets of the spirit, than with the spirit who as in a glass darkly looks into the mirror' (p. xxvii). He finds it too 'material' and illusionistic, not 'symbolic' (p. xxvi),

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<sup>78</sup> Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), pp. 283, 281.

views which were almost certainly influenced by Yeats,<sup>79</sup> and believes the Belgian drama can counteract it. The two Maeterlinck plays that follow *Usna* certainly resist the method of Ibsen. In both, the main events of the play occur in an enclosed space (one with four walls, the other off-stage) which the audience only ever gets glances at. These plays instead centre our attention on what happens outside the four walls by dramatising the role of the audience: the protagonists don't have access to these spaces either, and Maeterlinck evokes the tensions, miscommunications and sense of the unknown experienced between the audience and the action. *The House of Usna* is less original in its rejection of theatrical illusionism but the presence of disembodied voices that haunt the stage, common to Maeterlinck's dramas, achieve similar effects – distance from logical, material representation. Sharp draws on this effect of Maeterlinck's to evoke the mysticism of Celtic Spiritualism: the theatre of the Celtic Twilight is borrowing from the styles of the Belgian movement to support and further the Celtic movement.

Although Sharp's work can replay the colonial paradigm, where the 'natives' internalise 'the narratives of progress and national destiny that led to their oppression in the first place',<sup>80</sup> by portraying the Celt as backward and feminine, he did (at times) have an interest in overcoming centralisation and notions of 'civilisation'. These aspects open up spaces for cultural nationalist discourse and forming a 'politics of friendship'. Through identifying with Belgium, and through yoking cultures and sharing styles, he and his work create a solidarity that often performs the 'triumph of barbarism', undercutting narratives of progress. Only a few commentators in his time recognised this connection: for instance, *The Morning Leader* stated of *The Sin Eater* that: 'Her [Fiona's] weird story of the wild man of Iona who took upon himself the sins of a dead man whom he hated could hardly be rivalled outside the pages of

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<sup>79</sup> For Yeats encouraging Sharp to write 'symbolic' drama, see Ellmann, p. 132.

<sup>80</sup> Gibbons, 'Peripheral Modernities', p. 276.

Maeterlinck'.<sup>81</sup> It is important that we now recover this aspect of Sharp's oeuvre and its significance in attempting to form a counter-hegemony for peripheral cultures.

Sharp was not the only Celtic Revivalist who identified with *la jeune Belgique*. Visual artists, particularly in Glasgow – who Geddes believed 'headed' Scotland's Celtic movement,<sup>82</sup> were enthusiasts of Maeterlinck's works and brought his styles and ideas to bear on their art. The Glasgow Four, and many of their colleagues around the Glasgow School of Art, were known to have closely engaged with Maeterlinck's work, but this context has received little critical attention and has not been considered in light of Scotland's growing cultural nationalism. Like Sharp, drawing from Maeterlinck's work supported their attempts to develop a vocabulary of 'antimaterialistic images' to combat a period defined by material, utilitarian and scientific progress, which Mackintosh (like Yeats) believed was compromising traditional Scottish culture – discussed in the 'Celtic *Japonisme*' section of this chapter. For many associated with the Glasgow School, the Belgian connection was a means of countering narratives of improvement that helped distinguish and internationalise Scotland's culture.

Several of Maeterlinck's plays were performed in Scotland, between 1900 and 1920. In 1900, Mrs Patrick Campbell performed in *Pelléas and Mélisande* (Figure 2.4), as Mélisande, at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow, which she reprised in 1905 (in French) alongside Sarah Bernhardt who (at the age of 60) played the male protagonist, Pelléas, in Edinburgh. A year after the first performance, a substantial assessment of Maeterlinck appeared in *The Edinburgh Review*.<sup>83</sup> In 1910, *The Blue Bird* was performed at the Theatre Royal, and would go on to become his 'best known in this country'.<sup>84</sup> In 1911, *The Interior* was performed alongside Hardy's *The Three Wayfarers* and Barrie's *Pantaloons* at the Royalty in Glasgow, which was considered an

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<sup>81</sup> (cited in) William Halloran, 'Section XIV', 'The William Sharp "Fiona Macleod Archive', p. 14 <<http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/342/20/1896.Jan-June.pdf>> [accessed 13 October 2014]

<sup>82</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes for a lecture to the Celtic Society, 1897 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/9].

<sup>83</sup> 'M. Maurice Maeterlinck, Moralist and Artist', *The Edinburgh Review*, 396 (1901), 350-377.

<sup>84</sup> 'Recognition of War Services', *The Scotsman*, 19 November 1919, p. 7.

'exceedingly interesting' triple-bill.<sup>85</sup> *The Burgomaster of Stilemonde* was later performed at the Lyceum in Edinburgh in 1918. Maeterlinck was clearly popular in Scotland, as he was across Europe. Maeterlinck's translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which was performed at the Abbey of Saint Wandville in 1909, provides a further Scottish connection. His popularity in Glasgow is confirmed by the fact that Maeterlinck received his only honorary doctorate degree (Doctor of Laws) from the University of Glasgow in 1919, as part of a ceremony for individuals 'in recognition of the services rendered by them to the nation during the war'.<sup>86</sup> Although the specific reason for Maeterlinck's inclusion in this list is unclear (for he graduated *in absentia*), it is logical to assume that, like the poet Sir Henry Newbolt who was also included on this list, it was because his 'works have [...] given pleasure to many':<sup>87</sup> providing a distraction in wartime Britain.



Figure 2.4: Photograph of Sarah Bernhardt and Mrs Patrick Campbell in the 1904 reprisal of *Pelléas and Mélisande* (Victoria and Albert Museum)

<sup>85</sup> 'Glasgow', *The Scotsman*, 3 October 1911, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> 'Recognition of War Services', p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

Between 1900 and 1920, there was also a concerted effort to bring the Belgian energy to Glasgow's artistic community. Francis Newberry hired Jean Delville, the noted Belgian Symbolist painter, occultist and personal friend of Maeterlinck,<sup>88</sup> to be the first head of painting at the Glasgow School of Art in 1900, a position he held until 1906. He also hired Frederick Cayley Robinson, an important illustrator of Maeterlinck's work who designed sets for *The Blue Bird*, which were approved by Maeterlinck, as Professor of Figure Composition between 1914 and 1924. These attempts to bring the Belgian energy to Glasgow certainly had an impact on the artists there. Jessie M King, one of the leading book illustrators in Scotland, designed five covers for Maeterlinck's plays: *Alladine and Palomides* (1907), *The Interior* (1908), *The Seven Princesses* (1909), *The Death of Tintagiles* (1909) and *The Intruder* (Figure 2.5), all of which were published by Gowan's and Gray Ltd, in Glasgow. She also drew a scene from *Pelléas and Mélisande* (Figure 2.6) which was included in the special winter number of *The Studio* (1900-01). The flattened, elongated designs, disembodied figures, limited colour range and crisp, often sinuous, lines embody the less realistic and more symbolic and stylised representation that Yeats and Sharp wanted to pursue through other artforms; it also reflects the style used in her own Celtic Revivalist illustrations and jewellery.

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<sup>88</sup> Timothy Neat, *Part Seen, Part Imagined: Meaning and Symbolism in the Work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), p. 122.



Figures 2.5 and 2.6: Jessie M King, [left] front cover for *The Intruder*, c.1914; [right] *Pelléas and Mélisande*, illustration for *The Studio*, c.1900 (reproduced with permission from The Stewartry Museum)



Figure 2.7: Margaret Macdonald, *The Mysterious Garden*, watercolour and ink over pencil, 1911 (National Galleries of Scotland GMA 5156)



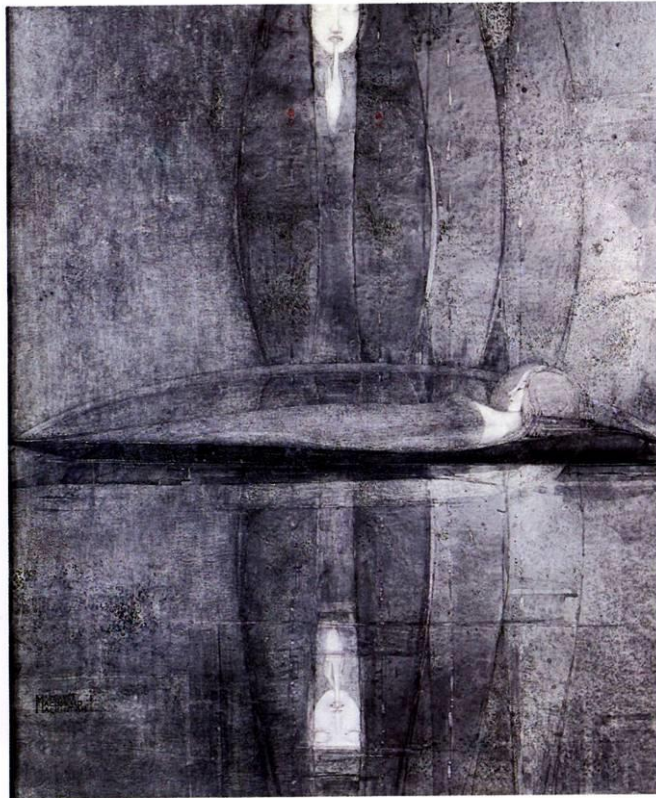


Figure 2.8: Margaret Macdonald, *The Pool of Silence*, 1913 (National Gallery of Canada)

The greatest impact that the Belgian Revival had in Glasgow though was on Margaret Macdonald and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Maeterlinck was a favourite author of theirs; E. B. Kalas noted that their Mains Street flat in Glasgow was 'strewn with the novels of Maeterlinck'.<sup>89</sup> His influence is often clearly apparent in their work and they draw from him to reject exteriority. *The Mysterious Garden* (Figure 2.7), by Macdonald, closely resembles a scene from Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*, which played in Glasgow the previous year. In a graveyard, Tyltyl and Mytyl notice that spirits come out of the ground:

Then, from all the gaping tombs, there rises gradually an efflorescence at first frail and timid, like steam; then white and virginal and more and more tufty, more and more tall and plentiful and marvellous. Little by little, irresistibly, invading all things, it transforms the graveyard into a sort of fairy-like and

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<sup>89</sup> (cited in) Pamela Robertson, 'Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh: The Seven Princesses', in *A Thoroughly Modern Afternoon: Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh and the Salon Waerndorfer in Vienna*, ed. by Hanna Egger and others (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2000), pp. 41-78 (p. 61).



nuptial garden, over which rise the first rays of dawn. The dew glitters, the flowers open their blooms, the wind murmurs'.<sup>90</sup>

Macdonald's painting resembles this description in many ways. As the title indicates, it is also in a mysterious garden, where a vaporous figure rises, becoming more white and virginal. The shape of the figure resembles the dew drops referred to in the play and the blue hue corresponds to the realm in the play where all is blue. The rigidity of the stylised figures behind the white woman is an indication that the space is somewhere between life and death. Similar rectilinear haunting figures also appear in another of Macdonald's Maeterlinck-inspired images, which will be discussed below (Figure 2.10).

Macdonald's *The Pool of Silence* (Figure 2.8) could also be reference to Maeterlinck's work, to a scene in *Pelléas and Mélisande* when Mélisande has to search for her ring in a dark cave by the sea which has a pool of water. In the pool, Mélisande claims to 'see something pass' in the water.<sup>91</sup> Even if the painting is not a direct reference to Maeterlinck's play, its subject (silence) reveals an affinity to Maeterlinck. Maeterlinck wrote at length on silence and language; for instance, in his introduction to Ruysbroeck's 'The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage' (1891), he stated:

I know, besides, that many of his phrases float almost like transparent icicles on the colourless sea of silence, but they exist; they have been separated from the waters, and that is sufficient [...] this is a vegetation so subtle that it can scarcely be distinguished from the silence from which it has drawn its juices and into which it seems ready to dissolve. This whole work, moreover, is like a magnifying glass turned upon darkness and silence.<sup>92</sup>

The subject of Macdonald's *The Pool of Silence* is highly akin to this 'colourless sea of silence'; it could well be a visual expression of Maeterlinck's description, where forms can only be faintly traced against the 'darkness'. A further affinity is visible in

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<sup>90</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Blue Bird*, trans. by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1919), p. 213.

<sup>91</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande* and *The Sightless*, trans. by Laurence Alma Tadema (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1900), p. 43.

<sup>92</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics: with selections from Ruysbroeck*, trans. by Jane T. Stoddart (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894), pp. 26-27.

Mackintosh's wall decorations for Miss Cranston's Buchanan Street tearooms (Figure 4.5). Here, human beings take on the form of trees and their bodies become indecipherable. This image has parallels to a question Maeterlinck asks in *The Treasure of the Humble* (1896): 'does a transparent tree exist within us, and are all our actions and all our virtues only its ephemeral flowers and leaves?'.<sup>93</sup> Of course, the tree of life was a common symbol in the period but there is a striking connection of ideas here: Maeterlinck's text was published in the same year as Mackintosh's design and, even if there is no direct influence, it does show how close their ideas were. This design also has occult dimensions, which will be dealt with in Chapter 4, but it is important to note here that Maeterlinck too was interested in the occult, and wrote a book on mysticism, *The Great Secret* (1922), which was highly praised by Geddes.<sup>94</sup> Given their interest in Maeterlinck's work, it is plausible that Mackintosh and Macdonald's evident Rosicrucianism could have (at least partly) derived from their Maeterlinck readings. Maeterlinck helped the Glasgow School develop their resistance to 'the old bondage of exteriority' – critiquing the materialism, rationalism and utilitarianism that were revered by the Victorian and Edwardian middle class.

Critics were quick to notice the affinities between the styles and ideas of Mackintosh, Macdonald and Maeterlinck. When attending the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art in Turin, 1902, Georg Fuchs admired The Scottish Section (he noted that a 'neuen Sang' was being sung in Scotland).<sup>95</sup> His comments on 'The Rose Boudoir', one of Mackintosh's most acclaimed interior designs, are revealing:

One could perform plays by Maeterlinck in these rooms; just as that poet's doomed spirits come to mind, sitting nonchalantly on these high-backed chairs like brothers of the floating figures on the rugs and utensils, at the same time one doubts that people of flesh and blood could work and relax there, eat food, and laugh, and bring up their children.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Maeterlinck, *The Treasure*, p. 70.

<sup>94</sup> Philip Boardman, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator, Peace-warrior* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 450.

<sup>95</sup> (cited in) Robertson, 'Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh', p. 51.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51n.

Fuchs notes an important dimension of Mackintosh's Symbolist spaces: they are designed to move the individual into a spiritual world, distanced (although not divorced) from material, utilitarian considerations. Many of the features in his designs reveal this, beyond their seeming impracticality. For instance, his high back chairs for Miss Cranston's Argyle Street tearooms have oval roundels that float above the head, making the sitter appear as though they have a halo (Figure 2.9). Bringing the spiritual and the sacred into 'ordinary' life would have appealed to the Belgian dramatist.



Figure 2.9: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, High-backed chair for the Luncheon Room, Miss Cranston's Argyle Street Tea Rooms, oak, 1898-9 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)

It was Mackintosh and Macdonald's exhibitions in Europe that led to one of their most important commissions: Fritz Waerndorfer's Music Room in Vienna. The design is the most explicit expression of Maeterlinckian inspiration in their work and is now often referred to as 'the Maeterlinck room'. Waerndorfer saw Mackintosh and Macdonald's work at the Eighth Secession Exhibition in Vienna and purchased 'a silver

brooch by Margaret Macdonald, a drawing, and two prints' from the Scottish Section.<sup>97</sup> Waerndorfer also went to Glasgow to see the Mackintoshes' work and he commissioned them to design his music room.<sup>98</sup> The result was a scheme called *The Seven Princesses*, based on Maeterlinck's play of the same title. In the play, Seven Princesses are locked in glass room on the stage, sleeping. Prince Marcellus returns by sea to visit the Princesses, and choose a bride, but, by the time he manages to break into the room from below through the family crypt, Ursula, his chosen one, is dead. Stylistically, the play is akin to *The Interior*: presenting the audience with a glass cage, embodying the fourth wall. The haunting voices that recur throughout further interrogate theatrical illusionism, replacing exteriority with disembodied mystery. It is this plot and these styles that greatly influenced the room's design.

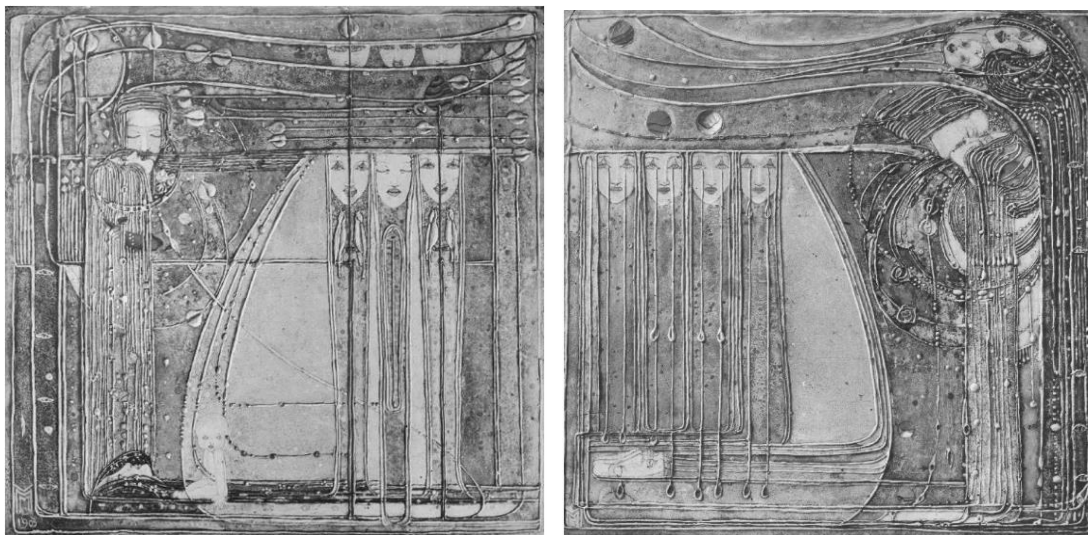


Figure 2.10: (Photographs of) Margaret Macdonald, [left] *Opera of the Winds*; [right] *Opera of the Seas*, gesso panel, 1903 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)

The first pieces produced, in 1903, were four appliqué panels by Frances MacNair for the curtain separating the music room from the dining room and two panels for the piano in the room by Margaret Macdonald, titled: *Opera of the Winds* and *Opera of the Seas* (Figure 2.10). These titles refer to the ominous voices that

<sup>97</sup> Peter Vergo, 'The Vanished Frieze', in *A Thoroughly Modern Afternoon: Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh and the Salon Waerndorfer in Vienna*, ed. by Hanna Egger and others (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2000), pp. 18-40 (p. 28).

<sup>98</sup> Janice Helland, *The Studios of Frances and Margaret Macdonald* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 155.

sing 'The Atlantic' and 'We shall return no more'<sup>99</sup> in the play, as well as the ship on stage that eventually disappears, leaving the characters stranded. The seven princesses are represented but one has her eyes shut, referring to Ursula's death. The fusion of curvilinear and rectilinear forms also complements the tension in the play between the anxiety and supernaturalism outside the glass room and the still rigidity within. The striking use of gold against black gives the scenes the other-worldly, spiritual atmosphere that was pursued by the Glaswegians and the Belgians.



Figure 2.11: Margaret Macdonald, *The Seven Princesses*, gesso panel, 1906 (© MAK)



Figure 2.12: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, sketch for *The Return of Prince Marcellus*, 1903 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)

The music room was also to be decorated with large gesso panels evoking the same play. Three completed panels by Margaret Macdonald, *The Seven Princesses* (Figure 2.11), survive but they were only discovered in 1990 (due to a wall being built around them for preservation purposes sometime after 1916, indicative of their perceived significance). The panel that was intended to face these in the room, by

<sup>99</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Plays of Maurice Maeterlinck*, trans. by Richard Hovey (New York: Duffield and Company, 1906), p. 344.

Mackintosh, may never have been executed but the sketch survives in the Hunterian Art Gallery (Figure 2.12). Mackintosh depicts the return of Marcellus and Macdonald represents the death of Ursula, when she is carried away by her sisters and is defined by the dark roses, while her sisters have white ones. The limited colour range, flattening of forms and ornate, sinuous striations that bring together all of the individuals and objects are common to Celtic Revival art in the period but, here, they are used to represent this scene of Maeterlinck's. This ambitious design demonstrates how Maeterlinck's play of mortality, desire and mysticism could be coupled incredibly effectively with the styles of the Celtic Revival. In this respect, Glasgow's artists were akin to the Pre-Raphaelites who also looked to Maeterlinck (and Maeterlinck looked to them) to develop their vocabularies of 'antimaterialistic images' – those distancing themselves from scientific and material developments were finding solidarity across borders.<sup>100</sup>

By bringing styles that were identified in Europe as 'Scottish' to Maeterlinck's play, which (like Celtic Revival art) rejected illusionism and reverted to a more mystical period and subject matter, Mackintosh and Macdonald could perform a cultural yoking that brought 'peripheral' movements together. The subjects and styles of the Belgian movement offered the Scots a vocabulary of barbarity and resistance to materiality that informed their developments and allowed an associated cultural movement to develop. In doing this, they (perhaps unconsciously) contributed towards the development of a 'counter-hegemony'. When considered in the context of Sharp's writings, their work reflects the desire to bring like-minded cultures together to subvert stadialist and utilitarian narratives that sought to malign cultures on the margins seeking to preserve or recover themselves. Their engagement in this cultural nationalist context was not limited to their Maeterlinck-inspired works; they performed an equally significant cultural yoking in the period that attempted to draw out the orientalism of Scottish culture: a yoking of Scottish and Japanese traditions. Through

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<sup>100</sup> For discussions of Maurice Maeterlinck's interest in the Pre-Raphaelites, see Sharp, "'The Princess Maleine'" and "'The Intruder'", p. 271; for Burne-Jones's costume designs for *Pelléas and Mélisande*, see Katharine Worth, 'Maeterlinck in Light of the Absurd', in *Around the Absurd: Essays on Modern and Postmodern Drama*, ed. by Enoch Brater and Ruby Cohn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), pp. 19-32 (p. 20).

this association, Scottish cultural nationalists could continue to distance Scotland from the metropole but – nevertheless – maintain ties to it as the Japan association reflected and celebrated Scotland's industrial and imperial connection to Japan, which was not resisted. With Japan, Scotland's desire to perform the 'triumph of barbarism', but keep its imperial identity, becomes clearer.

## 2.4 Celtic Japonisme

In his review of *Old World Japan: Legends of the Land of Gods* (1895), retold by Frank Rinder – the husband of his lover Edith Rinder, Sharp draws out a further significant Celtic connection. He writes:

Again and again in *Old World Japan*, which is throughout distinctively oriental and recognisably Japanese, one is reminded of our extraordinary rich and beautiful Celtic mythology. Here are episodes, and even whole tales, which, disengaged from what is accidental, might as well have come to us through Dr. Douglas Hyde or Campbell of Islay. How many tales of Hy-Brasil, or Tir-fa-tonn, are suggested by their oriental congener, "The Island of Eternal Youth", as beautifully retold by Mr. Rinder. Change a few names or localities, real or imaginary; for scarlet lily or lotus substitute the purple heather or the white canna [...] and this Japanese folk-tale might in perfect keeping be interpolated in "The Voyage of Maelduin," or in any of the old Celtic Romances'.<sup>101</sup>

For Sharp, there was a marked kinship between Japanese and Celtic storytelling and mythic traditions. Like *The Mystery of Cloomber*, this review is a further example of how Scottish cultural nationalists attempted to 'orientalise' the nation, to imagine it as 'other'. This section of the chapter explores the strong and numerous connections Scotland developed with Japan and how this cultural yoking particularly strengthened a key facet of the Scots Renaissance – the desire to distance (but not divorce) Scotland from the metropole.

Celtic orientalism has received detailed criticism from other critics, but mostly with regard to Ireland. Joseph Lennon's monograph *Irish Orientalism* traces the

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<sup>101</sup> William Sharp, 'Old World Japan: Legends of the Land of the Gods', *The Academy*, 1232 (1895), 516-517 (p. 516).

'literary and intellectual links between the Oriental and the Celt', particularly between Ireland and India – connections that tended to authenticate Ireland's image as 'a wild, remote borderland'; it was a 'mutual othering'.<sup>102</sup> The book demonstrates that Ireland's ancient 'inaccessible' history, key to developing national identity – as is discussed in Chapter 3, could 'be accessed through a comparative study of the living Orient' (p. xvii). An 'anti-imperial and cross-colonial narrative' that supported Irish cultural nationalism emerged (p. xvii). Lennon makes the point that we should not see Ireland's identification with the Orient as simply 'self-deprecating and reactionary' (p. xix), as replaying the narrative of the Celt as 'backward'. As was demonstrated in the 'Decadent Savage' section, 'othering' was also a means of defining and individuating the nation and its contacts, a site of 'agency' (p. xxvi): 'Celtic-Oriental comparisons allowed Irish writers to rhetorically assert both their proximity to the metropole, or the center of the Empire, and their proximity to the periphery' (p. xxvi).

Lennon also notes how key Japan could be for Ireland: Yeats, for instance, used the style and tropes of the Japanese Noh to inform his nationalist drama. Furthermore, Claire Nally notes that Yeats's interest in the mask – a key feature of Noh drama – stood for both a 'desired alternate self' and something antithetical to self: 'the admittance of the Other promotes greater unity in both the self in psychological terms, and the nation in political terms'.<sup>103</sup> For Nally, the symbol of the mask supported the nationalist movement: it suggested an alternate, preferable self and something authentic that lay beneath the surface – key to the discourse of cultural nationalism, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Yeats admired the simplicity of Japanese painting too: it offered the 'antimaterialistic images' he believed were needed to reclaim 'unadulterated traditional culture'.<sup>104</sup>

This Irish identification with the Orient contrasts with several in England, who took the Orient, and Japan specifically, to signify something 'other' – either threatening or absent (there was also a similar response in England to Paganism –

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<sup>102</sup> Lennon, *Irish Orientalism*, pp. xv-xvii [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>103</sup> Claire Nally, *Envisioning Ireland: W. B. Yeats's Occult Nationalism* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 149, 168.

<sup>104</sup> Lennon, pp. 283, 281.



discussed in Chapter 3). This is not to say that Japanese culture didn't filter into cultural nationalism in England but its significance in that movement was muted and more contested. Indeed, many in England believed that the enthusiasm for Japanese styles was damaging to English art. Ruskin, for instance, described the Japanese as a 'partially inferior race' and believed that their art was 'harmful to many of our painters'.<sup>105</sup> This attitude was shared by the likes of James Jackson Jarves who claimed that 'the Oriental, the animal-human, chooses that type of human figure which thoroughly demonstrates his earthiness'.<sup>106</sup> Such views are also reflected in T. E. Reed's illustration 'Britannia à la Beardsley', mentioned earlier in this chapter, which visually demonstrates how the import of Japanese styles (and Decadence more widely) could challenge British cultural and imperial ascendancy. For many, Japan was imagined in a binary with industrial progress and it was responded to on this basis, either positively or negatively. Indeed, Nordau – the severest critic of Decadence and supporter of scientific and industrial progress – believed that enthusiasm for traditional Oriental decorations (as well as thistleheads, among other things)<sup>107</sup> were symptoms of degeneration. Enthusiasm for Japanese art in England was often on account that it offered an corrective to a culture of industrialism and 'progress' and preserved pre-industrial cultural forms. William Burges, for instance, believed the culture of the Middle Ages only remained in 'the Japanese Court',<sup>108</sup> while – as been mentioned – Wilde's Vivian preferred the art of the Orient to that of the English 'degraded race', which he described as 'the true Decadence', a rebuttal to those who believed that a culture of utilitarian and commercial development was 'civilised'.<sup>109</sup> While for many in Ireland, the Orient was felt to be closely related to their identity, in England it was common for Japan to be distanced from, or feel removed from, theirs.

Scottish cultural nationalists were certainly far closer to those in Ireland in this regard. Like Yeats, several Scottish cultural nationalists performed a cultural yoking

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<sup>105</sup> (cited in) Linda Gertner Zatlín, *Beardsley, Japonisme and the Perversion of the Victorian Ideal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 26.

<sup>106</sup> (cited in) Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991), p. 161.

<sup>107</sup> Nordau, pp. 9-10.

<sup>108</sup> Charlotte Gere and Lesley Hoskins, *The House Beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2000), p. 42.

<sup>109</sup> Wilde, *Plays, Prose Writings and Poems*, pp. 80-81.

with Japan (earlier than Yeats – in the 1890s) in order to similarly distinguish and ‘other’ Scotland, to distance it from the metropole. Through Japan, Scotland could build, and contribute to its own counter-hegemony – not only associating it with a resistant barbarity but also orientalism. While Belgian cultural nationalists were pursuing a more Teutonic understanding of their ethnicity, that stood in opposition to the developing Celticism in Scotland, the orientalism of Japan was encoded as distinctly non-Saxon. This ethnic dimension could lend further support to the Celtic Revival: by yoking Scottish and Japanese cultures, Scottish cultural nationalists could further distance Scotland from Saxon understandings of ethnicity, supporting the unified ‘Celtic’ recasting of Scotland’s identity (discussed in Chapter 1). Furthermore, Japan had an extra meaning for Scottish cultural nationalists, who wanted to design a cultural nationalism that did not jeopardise its role in the British Empire. While Japan was commonly associated with the pre-industrial in other cultures, Scotland in this period built up a strong industrial and civic tie with Japan and supported its nascent Empire. This tie led to cultural exchanges that inspired the orientalising of Scottish culture but it also created a space for cultural nationalists to use the fellowship to celebrate Scotland’s industrialism and imperialism. Through the Japan connection particularly, Scotland could both celebrate the forces of modernisation as well as ‘unadulterated traditional culture’ – a tension that is so clearly evident in the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Indeed, Japan was also experiencing a problem in this period over how to maintain its indigenous identities whilst on the global stage:<sup>110</sup> like Scotland, this industrial powerhouse still held to (and was widely associated) with its traditional, pre-commercial identities. The Japanese cultural connection that spoke against narratives of improvement but still celebrated Scotland’s Empire, and its own imperial connections, was ideal for supporting and inspiring the tentative form of cultural nationalism that was developing in Scotland. In Scotland, there was less of the ‘violent proximity’ Gibbons discusses but, nonetheless, one that did distance

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<sup>110</sup> Michael Gardiner, *At the Edge of Empire: The Life of Thomas B. Glover* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), p. 124.

Scotland from the metropole. In this regard, like Irish orientalism, Scottish *japonisme* had a 'distinct history',<sup>111</sup> one which is yet to be explored.<sup>112</sup>

This section of the chapter will begin by discussing the close industrial and civic connections between Scotland and Japan and the consequent enthusiasm for Japanese culture in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow. From here, the chapter will consider how Scottish cultural nationalists (across the nation) yoked tropes of traditional Japanese culture with Celtic and Scottish culture to orientalise and 'other' Scotland. It will also examine the many parallels made between Scotland and Japan in the period, in terms of race, industry and culture. Finally, by considering Mackintosh, it will analyse how Scotland's connection with Japan both allowed Scotland to simultaneously look back to indigenous forms but also to celebrate modernisation.

Olive and Sydney Checkland have argued that Japan's industrial and imperial development, engendered by opening its borders from 1853, was largely indebted to Glasgow: 'not surprisingly, the new Japan, in its world search for best practice, turned to Glasgow for science and engineering'.<sup>113</sup> Olive Checkland writes elsewhere that 'Japan's railways depended on Glasgow steam engines, and Clyde-built steam ships filled her harbours'.<sup>114</sup> Certainly, the Japanese were keen to establish ties with Scottish industries to develop their modernisation. As early as 1866, individuals, such as Yamao Yōzō, were sent to the likes of Napier's shipyard in Govan to learn how the Japanese should build their ships.<sup>115</sup> Until 1914, with the exception of London, there was a greater Japanese population in Glasgow than anywhere else in Britain.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Lennon, p. xviii

<sup>112</sup> Several critical pieces have been written on Scotland's *japonisme* but not in the context of the national revival; these include: Ayako Ono, *Japonisme in Britain: Whistler, Menpes, Henry, Hornel and Nineteenth-Century Japan* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 114-138; Ysanne Holt, 'The Veriest Poem of Art in Nature': E. A. Hornel's Japanese Garden in the Scottish Borders', *Tate Papers*, 2 (2004), <<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/04autumn/holt.htm>> [accessed 24 January 2012]; Olive Checkland, *Japan and Britain after 1859: Creating Cultural Bridges* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), pp. 142-150; Andrew MacMillan, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: A Mainstream Forerunner', *Architectural Association Quarterly*, 12.3 (1980), 4-10; Hiroyuki Suzuki, 'From Glasgow to Japan: Background to Mackintosh', in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh* (Tokyo: Japan Art and Culture Association, 1985), pp. 11-15; Dorothy Bruce, *Alexander Reid and the Japanese Influence: Art, Ships and Plants* (Blairmore: Cowalfest Publishing, 2009).

<sup>113</sup> Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832-1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), p. 149.

<sup>114</sup> Checkland, *Japan*, p. 22.

<sup>115</sup> Checkland, *Industry and Ethos*, p. 22; Olive Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan, 1868-1912* (Houndmills: The Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 112.

<sup>116</sup> Checkland, *Japan*, p. xiii; Checkland, *Britain's Encounter*, p. 134.

Students were attracted to Glasgow's Chair of Naval Architecture, with one Japanese student describing Glasgow as in the 'highest class in the world for naval architecture'.<sup>117</sup>

Scots also had important roles to play in Japan. Thomas Blake Glover went to the Far East with Jardine Matheson and Company and in Japan, from 1859, he established naval links and contracts, including Japanese ships that would be produced in Aberdeen: *Satsuma* (1864), *Ho Sho Maru* (1868), *Jho Sho Maru* (1869), and *Wen Yu Maru* (1870).<sup>118</sup> He later established Japan's first mine, 'attracting its first modern labour force'<sup>119</sup> and encouraged Japanese imperial expansion.<sup>120</sup> Glover would also play an important role in supporting the rebel clans against the feudal militarist bakufu, which led to the Meiji Restoration in 1868, transforming the Japanese nation.<sup>121</sup>

Japan imported various other forms of Scottish expertise. The Stevensons and Richard Henry Brunton built 'a complete ring of lighthouses around Japan'.<sup>122</sup> Henry Dyer, the Scottish engineer, was the first head of the Imperial College of Engineering in Japan from 1873,<sup>123</sup> at which several graduates of the University of Glasgow would become staff.<sup>124</sup> Henry Dyer, E. Divers, I. Perry, J. Milne and W. E. Ayerton were also sent to Japan to assist with the development of its industry.<sup>125</sup> There, Dyer helped set up Japan's largest engineering works, Akabane, and provided advice on Japan's first railway. James Alfred Ewing has been credited with introducing many forms of physics to Japan when he was a professor there between 1878 and 1883.<sup>126</sup> Further ships were imported from Glasgow, including the 1874 twin-screw steamer *Meiji Maru*, which would be followed by the 1900 rangefinder *Mikasa* that proved influential in securing naval victories for Japan over Russia. There was a clear desire to import

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<sup>117</sup> Checkland, *Britain's Encounter*, p. 141.

<sup>118</sup> Gardiner, pp. 69-70.

<sup>119</sup> Checkland, *Industry and Ethos*, p. 160.

<sup>120</sup> Gardiner, pp. 153-4.

<sup>121</sup> Gardiner, p. 45-66.

<sup>122</sup> Checkland, *Industry and Ethos*, p. 23.

<sup>123</sup> Checkland, *Britain's Encounter*, p. 76.

<sup>124</sup> Checkland, *Japan*, p. 22.

<sup>125</sup> Suzuki, pp. 11-12.

<sup>126</sup> Yukinobu Tanabe, *Robert Louis Stevenson's View of the Japanese* [chapter in unidentified book] (1976), p. 44.

Scottish talent into Japan. The imperial connection between the two was reflected in the Honorary Japanese Consul which served in Glasgow between 1890 and 1941.<sup>127</sup>

These industrial connections laid the foundations for strong cultural bonds between the two nations. As Olive Checkland argues, 'No one was more excited about Japan and Japanese arts and crafts than the artistic community in Glasgow'.<sup>128</sup> In 1878, a cultural exchange was performed between the Japanese government and the City of Glasgow, which was partly orchestrated by Robert Henry Smith. As part of this exchange, in November 1878, Glasgow received '31 cases, containing 1150 items'<sup>129</sup> from Japan and the *Glasgow Herald* reported that 'they form a collection which for variety and representative character we are safe to say is not equalled in any museum in this country'.<sup>130</sup> Many of these went on display in the Glasgow Corporation Art Galleries' exhibition of Oriental Art (Japanese and Persian) between 1881 and 1882, twenty years after the first major exhibition of Japanese art in London: the International Exhibition of 1862, with its Japan section featuring objects chosen by the Rutherford Alcock – Japan's British Minister,<sup>131</sup> was the first to kindle 'popular awareness of things Japanese' in London.<sup>132</sup> The Glasgow exhibition also featured a lecture from Glasgow-born Christopher Dresser who wrote *Japan: Its Architecture, Art and Manufacture*, which was published in 1882 after his visit to Japan.

Following the exhibition, during the 1880s, Scotland's artistic interest in Japan grew and became particularly strong at the end of that decade. The City Oriental Warehouse advertised exhibits of Japanese wares in 1888<sup>133</sup> and Alexander Reid (who had visited Japan) opened his *La Société des Beaux-Arts* with an exhibition of Japanese prints (mainly Hokusai's) in 1889. Like Reid, William Burrell also collected

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<sup>127</sup> Checkland, *Japan and Britain*, p. xiii.

<sup>128</sup> Checkland, *Japan and Britain*, p. 116.

<sup>129</sup> Antonia Lovelace, *The Glasgow Japan Exchange of 1878* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 1991), p. 12.

<sup>130</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Watanabe, p. 89.

<sup>132</sup> Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996), p. 30.

<sup>133</sup> *With an Eye to the East: The Influence of Japan on Scottish Art* exhibition pamphlet (Scottish Arts Council; an exhibition prepared in collaboration with the City of Dundee District Council Art Galleries and Museums, 1988).

Japanese prints at this time,<sup>134</sup> although he was more interested in ancient Chinese wares over the newly imported Japanese works. J. B. Bennett & Sons also held an exhibition of Chinese and Japanese ceramics in 1890 while in 1893 Paterson and Thomas exhibited Paterson's collection of over 200 Japanese prints,<sup>135</sup> many of which were purchased by the British Museum and remain in their collections. Furthermore, Hornel's paintings of Japan sold remarkably well when exhibited at *La Société des Beaux-Arts* in April 1895. A notable demand for Japanese-inspired art clearly became established c.1890 in Glasgow and these dealers were highly receptive to it. Similarly, Scottish carpet designers such as Stoddard International plc acquired Japanese embroideries and Japanese stencils which were used to inspire their designs.<sup>136</sup> The Scottish press was also publishing literature on Japan: in 1888-9, *The Scottish Art Review* published articles on *kakemonos* (hanging vertical scroll pictures) and sword guards while speaking favourably of Siegfried Bing's *Artistic Japan* magazine.

Partly as a consequence of these ties, there were numerous comparisons between Scottish and Japanese people. As early as 1873, similarities between the Highlander and the Japanese samurai were drawn out by David S. Miller who travelled from Scotland to Japan.<sup>137</sup> Such historical comparisons were also met with comparisons to contemporary society: in 1908, at the opening of the Japanese section of the Scottish National Exhibition – an event discussed in Chapter 5, Sir A. R. Simpson 'commented on the similarities – in patriotism, love of education, hospitality and in other characteristics – between the people of Japan and the people of Scotland'.<sup>138</sup> This was akin to Hornel's claim: 'in Scotland we pride ourselves on our homeliness. In Japan we see ourselves equalled in this respect'.<sup>139</sup> Critics too noted the similarities between the styles of their national arts: in 1911, Kuno Meyer noted

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<sup>134</sup> Rosemary Scott, 'Japanese Prints', in *The Burrell Collection*, ed. unknown (Glasgow: Collins in association with Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1983), pp. 70-1.

<sup>135</sup> Frances Fowle, *Van Gogh's Twin: The Scottish Art Dealer Alexander Reid* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2011), p. 66.

<sup>136</sup> Japanese Embroideries volume [Archive Service, University of Glasgow: STOD/201/1/11/2].

<sup>137</sup> 'Lecture on Japan', *Glasgow Herald*, 2 May 1873, p. 4.

<sup>138</sup> 'The Exhibition', *The Scotsman*, 11 July 1908, p. 7.

<sup>139</sup> E. A. Hornel, *Japan: Lecture by E. A. Hornel delivered in the Corporation Art Galleries, Glasgow, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1895* (Castle Douglas: J. H. Maxwell, 1895), p. 11.

that 'like the Japanese, the Celts were always quick to take an artistic hint; they avoid the obvious and the commonplace; the half-said thing to them is dearest'.<sup>140</sup> This racial connection was drawn out by the journal *Theosophy in Scotland* where it was noted that 'many oriental traits still linger in the Celtic mind'.<sup>141</sup> Unlike in England, there was very little hesitancy over identifying and comparing *fin-de-siècle* Scotland with Japan.

What is significant about the growing industrial and imperial ties between Scotland and Japan for this discussion is that cultural nationalists in Scotland did not contest the Japan relationship, quite the opposite. Their work authenticated the bonds between the two nations and this reveals key facets of cultural nationalism in *fin-de-siècle* Scotland. The Japan connection created a site that allowed cultural nationalists in Scotland to distance their own culture from the metropole (as occurred in Ireland, primarily with India) but, by choosing Japan, Scottish cultural nationalists simultaneously celebrated the growing industrial connection. Scottish cultural nationalism was underpinned by a desire to unify Scotland, to distance it from British accommodation, but not in a way that would completely subvert the narratives of progress and modernity that were so fundamental to the Empire.

Cultural nationalists were particularly keen to use Japan in order to orientalise Scotland, to distance it from the British imperial core. This is evident in the works of several artists and writers, among them was Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson had a far greater interest in Japanese culture than tends to be recognised. He wrote two articles on Japan: 'Yoshida-Torajiro' for *Cornhill Magazine* in 1880 and 'Byways of Book Illustration: Two Japanese Romances' for the *Magazine of Art* in 1883, and intended to write an article on Hokusai for Henley.<sup>142</sup> Stevenson owned many Japanese volumes,<sup>143</sup> collected Japanese prints and read Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*,<sup>144</sup> according to Yukinobu Tanabe's *Robert Louis Stevenson's View of the*

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<sup>140</sup> (cited in) Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Invention of Celtic Poetry', in *Celticism*, ed. by Terence Brown (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 97-124 (p. 102).

<sup>141</sup> Brother Atisha, 'The Future Works of Scotland', *Theosophy in Scotland*, 4 (1910) p. 61.

<sup>142</sup> Tanabe, p. 46.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 40.

*Japanese*, as well as Isabella Bird's *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*.<sup>145</sup> Zatlin claims that Stevenson visited Japan<sup>146</sup> which is dubious but he certainly intended to 'head for Japan',<sup>147</sup> as he stated in a letter to his wife, while travelling on the Pacific. Stevenson's Davos woodcuts may also have been inspired by Japanese woodcut techniques (Figure 2.13).<sup>148</sup>



Figure 2.13: Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Peak in Darien*, illustration in *Moral Emblems*, 1882



Figure 2.14: Japanese Garden, Cowden Castle, Clackmannanshire, 1909 (Private Collection)

What is significant about Stevenson's knowledge of Japan is that he often aligns Japan with Scotland and uses his discussions, as in his novels, to critique 'civilisation' and recover space for marginalised peoples. In 'Byways of Book

<sup>145</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers and other essays*, ed. by Jeremy Treglown (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988), p. 164.

<sup>146</sup> Zatlin, p. 23.

<sup>147</sup> (cited in) Tanabe, p. 48.

<sup>148</sup> Richard J. Hill, 'Robert Louis Stevenson's Davos Studio: Author and Art in 1882', *Scottish Literary Review*, 2.2 (2010), 65-83.



Illustration', he performs the 'triumph of barbarism' that is found in Sharp's Belgian-inspired texts and Baudelaire's 'Further Notes on Poe':

There is no form of conceit more common or silly than to look down on barbarous codes of morals. Barbarous virtues, the chivalrous point of honour, the fidelity of the wild highlander or the two-sworded Japanese, are of a generous example. We may question the utility of what is done; the whole hearted sincerity of the actors shuts our mouth.<sup>149</sup>

Here, Stevenson not only compares the Highlander to the Japanese but he vindicates their lifestyles and exposes those who would marginalise them, as he did in his novels. He applauds 'the superior duty, the duty of the clan',<sup>150</sup> using a term ('clan') which again is common to the two cultures while mocking their critics as 'silly'. He similarly discusses chieftains and castles,<sup>151</sup> further drawing out the affinities with Scotland. Stevenson's other Japanese essay, 'Yoshida-Torajiro' positively speaks of Yoshida's 'lively and intelligent patriotism', and his having 'the tenacity of a Bruce'.<sup>152</sup> This is not unlike Ella Christie's garden in Clackmannanshire (Figure 2.14) which contained Japanese stones symbolising five virtues, one of which was patriotism.<sup>153</sup> Japanese culture was used to celebrate patriotism. Unlike *In the South Seas*, where Stevenson uses Scotland as a model to compare other nations against,<sup>154</sup> with Japan Stevenson evokes a solidarity between it and Scotland, creating a counter-hegemony against those who would look down on the Highlander or Japanese.

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<sup>149</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Byways of Book Illustration: Two Japanese Romances', *Magazine of Art*, 6 (1883), 8-15 (p. 9).

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>152</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Yoshida-Torajiro', *Cornhill Magazine*, 41 (1880), 327-334 (pp. 327, 329).

<sup>153</sup> Lionel Lambourne, *Japonisme: Cultural Crossings Between Japan and the West* (London: Phaidon, 2005), p. 200; for more on Christie's garden, see Setsu Tashibana and others, 'Japanese Gardens in Edwardian Britain: Landscape and Transculturation', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30.2 (2004), 364-394 (379); Wybe Kuitert, 'Japonaiserie in London and the Hague: A History of the Japanese Gardens at Shepherd's Bush (1910) and Clingendael (c.1915)', *Garden History*, 30.2 (2002), 221-238 (p. 237).

<sup>154</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas: A Foot-Note to History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 15.



Figure 2.15: John Duncan, *The Glaive of Light*, oil on canvas, 1897 (University of Dundee Museum Services)



Figure 2.16: John Duncan, *St Bride*, tempera on canvas, 1913 (National Galleries of Scotland NG 2043)



Figure 2.17: David Gauld, *Music*, oil on canvas, 1889 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)



Figure 2.18: Agnes Middleton Raeburn, Poster for the Glasgow Lecture Association, colour lithograph, 1897 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)

Scottish artists, particularly those associated with cultural nationalism and the Celtic Revival, were also keen to perform this 'othering' and orientalisng of Scotland, one that removed it further from the metropole and narratives of stadialist progress. This is most clearly evident in the work of John Duncan. Duncan, who lived for a time on Eriskay with the Celtic Revivalist musician Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, was intensely involved in the Celtic Revival and created several murals and paintings that evoked Celtic figures, several of which are discussed in the following chapters. These Celtic figures frequently adopted the visual vocabulary of Japan. This is strikingly apparent in his painting *The Glaive of Light* (Figure 2.15). The oil painting represents the 'sword of light' which is used by heroes to combat monsters, an idea which features in many Scottish and Irish folk tales. Not only are the heroes dressed in kimonos – as his angels were in *St Bride* (Figure 2.16), which depicts the Celtic Goddess being carried from Iona to Bethlehem – but he signs the painting, as he did in many pieces from this period, with a symbol inspired by Japanese *mon* – heraldic symbols that are generally circular and draw from natural imagery. Neither of these features were the exclusive property of John Duncan. David Gauld (who included many Japanese tropes in his illustrations to the *Glasgow Weekly Citizen*) anticipates John Duncan in portraying figures with 'Celtic' red and black hair wearing kimonos in *Music* (Figure 2.17), George Henry places kimono-wearing figures in an Ayrshire village in *Landscape at Barr* (1891) while Agnes Middleton Raeburn signed her name vertically (typical of Japanese signatures) in her poster for The Glasgow Lecture Association (Figure 2.18), which includes flowers in the style of Japanese *mon* and pays homage to the Celtic Revival through the Celtic knot formed by the snake's tail. These works associate Scottish and Celtic culture with the visual vocabulary of Japan which helps to 'other' Scottish and Celtic culture further, distancing them from the realm of improvement, functionality and industry while simultaneously reinforcing Scotland's industrial connections to Japan.

Several of the Glasgow Boys developed an interest in Japan, none more so than E. A. Hornel. Alongside being a significant collector of Burns editions and



material culture, Hornel also collected a great number of original Japanese items and literature on Japan. Many books on Japanese culture are present in his library and he collected much *Japonaiserie*: kimonos, fans and other Japanese wares can be viewed in his collections at Broughton House.<sup>155</sup> His collection is akin to that of Alexander Bannatyne Stewart, Scotland's dandy,<sup>156</sup> who collected both Scottish and Oriental art.<sup>157</sup> In many of his projects, Hornel brings the two traditions together. This can be evidenced in his garden at Broughton House, Kirkcudbright.<sup>158</sup> It was designed as a Japanese garden, including a sculpture of a crane (Figure 2.19), but it also contains Celtic stones, including a Dalshangan Cross (Figure 2.20). The garden successfully yokes the Celtic with the Oriental and creates an outdoor space that affirms the solidarity of the two traditions.



Figure 2.19 and 2.20: [left] Statue of a crane; [right] a Dalshangan Cross [right] in Hornel's garden, Broughton House, Kirkcudbright (author's photographs)

Along with George Henry, Hornel visited Japan in 1893. The 1978 exhibition 'Mr Henry and Mr Hornel Visit Japan', which was held at Glasgow Art Gallery before touring and was curated by William Buchanan, covered their trip to Japan in the 1890s and its influence on their art, while subsequent studies have looked at their

<sup>155</sup> [Broughton House: 2493-2499].

<sup>156</sup> Fowle, *Van Gogh's Twin*, p. 75.

<sup>157</sup> 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 2791 (1881), p. 541; 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 2794 (1881), p. 662.

<sup>158</sup> For more on this garden, see Holt.

relationships with geishas in Japan.<sup>159</sup> However, it has also been suggested that Japan influenced the Glasgow Boys' art prior to their visit in 1893-94: a contemporary critic in Belgium noted that Hornel's decorative use of colour 'has a strong relation to Japanese art and is strongly akin to Gauguin'.<sup>160</sup> The Boys certainly knew of Japan before their travels. For example, fellow Glasgow Boy E. A. Walton dressed as Hokusai for the Glasgow Art Club's Fancy Dress Ball in 1889 (Figure 2.21) and his studio in Cambuskenneth (where Henry also worked) contained Japanese prints.<sup>161</sup> The Boys would also have known of *japonisme* through their enthusiasm for Whistler; his *Ten O'Clock* lecture, so celebratory of Japan, was described by Lavery as the Boys' 'gospel'.<sup>162</sup>



Figure 2.21: John Lavery, *Hokusai and the Butterfly*, oil on canvas, 1889 (National Galleries of Scotland PG 2467)

<sup>159</sup> Checkland, *Japan*, pp. 142-147.

<sup>160</sup> (cited in) William Buchanan, *Mr Henry and Mr Hornel Visit Japan*, exhibition catalogue (Glasgow: Scottish Arts Council, 1979), p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> William Buchanan, 'Japanese Influences on the Glasgow Boys and Charles Rennie Mackintosh', in *Japonisme in Art: An International Symposium*, ed. by The Society for the Study of Japonisme (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001), pp. 291-301 (p. 293).

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.



Figure 2.22: E. A. Hornel and George Henry, *The Druids – Bringing in the Mistletoe*, oil on canvas, 1890 (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection)



Figure 2.23: Utagawa Hiroshige, *Maple trees at Tsuten Bridge*, from *Famous Places of Kyoto* series, c.1834 (British Museum 1937,0710,0.262)

Hornel and Henry's earlier collaborative work demonstrates this interest in Japanese art and it appears in a Celtic Revival piece, *The Druids – Bringing in the Mistletoe* (Figure 2.22). The painting depicts druids who, after the chief has cut the mistletoe, which was believed to be both medicinal and miraculous, from an oak tree –

a tree they held sacred – undertake a solemn procession, with the mistletoe on top of the bulls’ backs. It is believed that Hornel and Henry developed the subject of the painting after watching an old man in Galloway, who was interested in Celtic carvings, have a vision about ‘priests with sacred instruments and cattle’.<sup>163</sup> Despite the obvious Celtic nature of the piece, it also references Japanese art. Buchanan noted that the painting ‘is a rich, gilded, decorative picture, and although on a Celtic theme, to many it may have had a touch of the Orient about it’.<sup>164</sup> A particularly Japanese feature of the painting is the presence of trees on oddly white ground, considering there is no snow on the trees. This appears to be drawn from a similar feature in Japanese prints (Figure 2.23) where dark trees are printed on white ground, creating stark contrast. The moon in the background, against a rich blue sky, also mimics a common feature of Japanese prints. The low viewpoint of the painting may not be particularly Japanese – since Japanese prints tend to have a high viewpoint – but its effect (reducing the capacity for recession of space) is. The striking use of complementary colours, such as the ochre against the blue in the background, is also similar to Japanese prints while – more generally – the innovative use of gilt gold details is common to Oriental art. Consequently, the culture represented appears ornate and luxurious: this is no simple, rude Celticism – a feature which further complicates stadialist understandings of the Celts. The figures are also darker skinned, which continues to orientalise the piece. These Japanese elements would not have gone unnoticed as *The Druids* was first exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery – the ‘stronghold of Aestheticism’<sup>165</sup> – whose audiences would have been sensitive to Japanese nuances. Like Duncan and others, Hornel and Henry ‘othered’ Celtic culture by placing it in proximity to the Orient.

Jessie M King (who oscillated between Kirkcudbright and Glasgow) is a further figure who brings Celtic culture and Japan together; her works demonstrate ‘a strange

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<sup>163</sup> (cited in) Roger Billcliffe, *The Glasgow Boys* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), p. 218.

<sup>164</sup> Buchanan, ‘Japanese Influences’, p. 294.

<sup>165</sup> Helland, *The Studios*, p. 70.



blend of Celtic romanticism filtered through Beardsley and Japan'.<sup>166</sup> The 'ribbonlike lines, spirals, whiplash curves, and abstract interlacing zoomorphic and human forms'<sup>167</sup> that define Celtic art are evident in such illustrations as *The Fisherman and his Soul* (Figure 2.24), for Wilde's *The House of Pomegranates*. Typical of King, she fuses Japanese and Celtic styles and decorations by including Celtic decorations on the vertical pillars and Japanese details on the embroideries at the top of the illustration.



Figure 2.24: Jessie M King, illustration for *The House of Pomegranates*, 1915 (reproduced with permission from The Stewartry Museum)

*Japonisme* was also evident in the Outlook Tower community. *The Evergreen* magazine itself contains images with Japanese subjects, most obviously Hornel's *Madame Chrysanthème* (Figure 2.25). This busy print has a Japanese subject matter while drawing its style from Japanese woodcuts. Geddes himself appears to have taken an interest in Japan. He possessed articles on Japanese art and a collection of fifteen Japanese postcards.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, it has been noted that the murals which

<sup>166</sup> Lambourne, *Japonisme*, p. 217.

<sup>167</sup> Jude Burkhauser, 'The Glasgow Style', in *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design 1880-1920* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2005), pp. 81-106 (p. 96).

<sup>168</sup> [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/4/3, T-GED 5/4/32].

Mary Rose Hill Burton designed for Geddes's flat in Ramsay Garden 'represented the seasons and suggested her admiration for Japanese art'.<sup>169</sup> Since we know Geddes tended to supervise and approve the murals,<sup>170</sup> it is likely that he enjoyed the Japanese style and did not think it unfitting to place them alongside the Celtic Revival murals at Ramsay Gardens, discussed in Chapter 3. Again, Japan could be fused with Celtic and national subjects while also creating the international links Geddes was so keen to pursue.



Figure 2.25: E. A. Hornel, *Madame Chrysanthème*, illustration for *The Evergreen*, 1895

Fuelling cultural nationalism through international colloquy with Japan is most successfully achieved visually in the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, particularly his Glasgow School of Art building, which was described by Geddes as 'one of the most important buildings in Europe'.<sup>171</sup> In Mackintosh's work, we witness the desire to orientalise Scotland to support his vocal cultural nationalism but what we also find is an interest in modernising which was supported by the industrial connection with

<sup>169</sup> Janice Helland, *Professional Women Painters in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Commitment, Friendship, Pleasure* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) p. 123.

<sup>170</sup> Megan C. Ferguson, 'Patrick Geddes and the Celtic Renaissance of the 1890s' [unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Dundee, 2011], p. 100.

<sup>171</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Aesthetics - on the utilitarian contempt, indifference and distrust of aesthetics' [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/3/70].

Japan. Using Japanese and Scottish traditional styles to fuel modernity, Mackintosh undercut stadialist narratives as he demonstrated that the past and modernity are not antagonists. In this way, Mackintosh's *japonisme* most successfully achieved the aims of the Scots Renaissance: disrupting stadialism and reclaiming Scottish culture while still celebrating the modernity and industry of Scotland.

Mackintosh's concern with cultural nationalism is evident throughout his career. In an early essay written on architecture, in 1892, Mackintosh shows reservations over adopting *japonisme* and instead favours supporting a national movement:

I think we should be a little less cosmopolitan & rather more national in our Archi[itecture], as we are with language, new words & phrases will be incorporated gradually, but the wholesale introduction of japanese senta [sic] for example would be denounced & rightly by the purist.<sup>172</sup>

Here, Mackintosh critiques the 'wholesale' absorption of Japan in the arts; he stresses that architecture should be fundamentally national, only incorporating other cultures by diffusion, and attacks those who would use Japan to dilute Scottish architecture. He continues: 'the history of nations is written in stone, but it certainly would be a difficult task to read a history from the architecture of this nation at the present time. We do not build as the ancients did who in each succeeding building tried to carry to further perfection the national type'.<sup>173</sup> He cautions against a 'build now in Greek if we love the Classic'<sup>174</sup> mentality and encourages architects to focus on the 'indigenous' forms, such as Scotch Baronial Architecture which is 'as indigenous to our country as our wild flowers, our family names our customs or our political constitution'.<sup>175</sup> Indeed, the 'positive tradition of romantic nationalism that Mackintosh subscribes'<sup>176</sup> to mimics the English Medievalists, such as Pugin, who claimed that 'there is no need of visiting the distant shores of Greece and Egypt to make discoveries in art. England alone

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<sup>172</sup> Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 'Untitled Paper on Architecture (c. 1892)', in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers*, ed. by Pamela Robertson (Wendlebury: White Cockade Publishing, 1990), pp. 180-200 (p. 196).

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 'Scotch Baronial Architecture (1891)', in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers*, ed. by Pamela Robertson (Wendlebury: White Cockade Publishing, 1990), pp. 49-63 (p. 51).

<sup>176</sup> Frank Arneil Walker, 'Scottish Baronial Architecture', in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers*, ed. by Pamela Robertson (Wendlebury: White Cockade Publishing, 1990), pp. 29-48 (p. 36).

abounds in hidden and unknown antiquities of surpassing interest'.<sup>177</sup> Mackintosh toured Scotland extensively and sketched his findings,<sup>178</sup> which greatly impacted on his career. His sketch of the observatory tower of Stirling High School, which very clearly influenced his Glasgow Herald Building (1893-1895), is an example of the significance of Scottish indigenous forms to his designs. His interest was complemented by his wife who too was interested in traditional Scottish culture – evidenced in her Celtic Revival work and the prominent inscription of her name on her copy of James Macpherson's *Ossian*.<sup>179</sup>



Figure 2.26: Drawing Room Fireplace, 120 Mains Street, Glasgow, c.1900 (T. & R. Annan & Sons)

However, Mackintosh's stance on Japan altered. By the mid-1890s he appears to acknowledge that certain uses of Japanese design did not necessarily dilute Scottish tradition; in fact, they could complement it. In this period, Mackintosh became more interested in Japanese art. Contemporary photographs reveal that he had Japanese greetings cards (*surimono*) hung above the fireplace at 120 Mains Street (Figure 2.26), much like E. A. Walton's studio, which are still viewable at the Mackintosh House, Hunterian Art Gallery; he had two Japanese prints hung above the fireplace in his basement bedroom at 27 Regent Park Square as early as 1896 too. Mackintosh would

<sup>177</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>178</sup> His Scottish notebook is reproduced in Elaine Grogan, *Beginnings: Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Early Sketches* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2002), pp. 9-46.

<sup>179</sup> For more on this inscription, see Helland, *The Studios*, p. 73.

also have been aware of Japanese arts and crafts through reading *The Studio* and Bing's *Artistic Japan*.<sup>180</sup>

Mackintosh's design for the Glasgow School of Art most clearly showcases his yoking of Scottish indigenous forms with Japanese forms. The fundamental architectural style underpinning Mackintosh's design of the school is Scottish Baronialism. Frank Arneil Walker has noted that the south elevation of the building follows a similar design to such Baronial buildings as Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire.<sup>181</sup> The eastern facade of the building also resembles Scottish forms, particularly Scottish castles with rough stone, deep-set windows highlighting the thickness of the walls, an outlook tower and arrow-loops (Figure 2.27). This was part of a context when a revival of Scottish architectural forms was taking place across the nation, evident in such works as Robert Rowand Anderson's Pearce Institute building. Not only does the Glasgow School of Art appear national in its architectural design but the decorative details are often inspired by the Celtic Revival. For example, the relief above the school entrance presents figures in Celtic dress styled in a curvilinear, simple manner, typical of Celtic art and Art Nouveau alike (Figure 2.28).

However, despite the typically national qualities underpinning the building, another tradition is strikingly evident in the building: Japanese. At the top of the eastern facade, so Scottish in many of its forms, Mackintosh includes an apparently redundant Japanese gable for decoration. As Buchanan has noted, the railings on the north facade (Figure 2.29) were inspired by Japanese *mon*.<sup>182</sup> According to Maggie Tatarkowski, they may also have been inspired by *tsuba* (Japanese sword guards), which were discussed in Bing's *Artistic Japan* which Mackintosh was likely to have read.<sup>183</sup> The decorative features underneath the *mon*-inspired designs could possibly have been inspired by Japanese arrowheads, which would reinforce the defence theme, as the basket hilt swords that inspired the window railings do (Figure 2.30). The

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<sup>180</sup> Buchanan, 'Japanese Influences', p. 298.

<sup>181</sup> Walker, p. 36.

<sup>182</sup> Bruce, p. 28.

<sup>183</sup> Maggie Tatarkowski, 'Japanese Art and its effect on the Art Nouveau Movement in Britain', in *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1922*, ed. by Phillips Payson O'Brien (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 208-221 (p. 219-220).

wrought-iron grill at the top of the west staircase (Figure 2.31) – with an identical form to the west façade windows (Figure 2.32) – reference Japanese *shoji* designs while the Composition Room studio (Figure 2.33) at the top of the west tower has a beam construction that is clearly inspired by Japanese shrines and beams.<sup>184</sup> These two combined traditions harmoniously complement each other, mainly through their austerity,<sup>185</sup> but they remain recognisably Scottish and Japanese. The Japanese style helps to distinguish the building from the European forms that Mackintosh felt were diluting Scottish art. Japan was no longer something that obscured Scottish forms but, when applied correctly, could help sharpen its indigenous feel and ‘otherness’ – distancing and distinguishing Scotland from the metropole.



Figure 2.27: East façade of the Glasgow School of Art, 1897-99 (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))

<sup>184</sup> Andrew MacMillan and others, 'A Tour of the Art School', in *Mackintosh's Masterwork: The Glasgow School of Art*, ed. by William Buchanan (London: A & C Black, 2004), pp. 83-130 (p. 123).

<sup>185</sup> Anthony Jones, 'Introduction', in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh* (Tokyo: Japan Art and Culture Association, 1985), pp. 8-10 (p. 9).



Figure 2.28: Relief above Entrance to the Glasgow School of Art, 1897-99 (© RCAHMS. Licensors [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))



Figure 2.29: Symbol on the railings of the north façade of the Glasgow School of Art, cast iron, 1889-1909 (© RCAHMS. Licensors [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))



Figure 2.30: Studio window railings on the north façade of the Glasgow School of Art, cast iron, 1889-1909 (© RCAHMS. Licensors [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))



Figure 2.31: Grille at top of west staircase, Glasgow School of Art, cast iron, 1889-1909 (© RCAHMS. Licensors [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))





Figure 2.32: Library windows on the west façade of the Glasgow School of Art, 1907-9  
(© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))



Figure 2.33: Contemporary photograph of the Composition Room, Glasgow School of Art, 1907-9 (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))



Figure 2.34: Writing cabinet for the Drawing Room, 120 Mains Street, Glasgow, painted oak, 1902 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)

He continued this fusion in several of his other designs. For instance, in his drawing room at 6 Florentine Terrace, which included many pieces from his 120 Mains Street flat, the importance of Japan becomes even more pronounced. Maggie Tatarkowski argues that the shape of Mackintosh's cabinets and writing bureaux are indebted to the Japanese kimono and this is certainly evident with the painted oak writing cabinet in the drawing room (Figure 2.34).<sup>186</sup> The space between the studio and drawing room is also divided by curtains which allow for the interpenetration and fluid definition of spaces, a Japanese principle of interior design, as Hornel noted:

Here [in Japan] walls have not only ears, they have also legs, and when you wish to make a new room, you simply "form square" by sliding enough panels in their grooves to enclose the space [...] when evening comes you do not seek your bedchamber, you simply make it, by sliding the walls round the spot you have chosen for your slumbers'.<sup>187</sup>

Mackintosh was evidently enthusiastic about a similar type of open-plan design. It is also apparent in his Baronial-style Scotland Street School which,<sup>188</sup> uncharacteristically for a school, has glass partially dividing classrooms and rooms that connect to each

<sup>186</sup> Tatarkowski, p. 216.

<sup>187</sup> Hornel, p. 11.

<sup>188</sup> The turrets for this building were most likely inspired by Mackintosh's sketch of Falkland Palace c.1901 [Hunterian: GLAHA 41423].

other and the outdoors (Figure 2.35). Nevertheless, the solid, unadorned design of the fireplace in his house (Figure 2.36) still resembles the forms of Scottish Baronial Architecture while the simplified, sinuous, linear nature of the decorations throughout the room are suggestive of Celticism (Figure 2.37). Mackintosh was clearly interested in using Japanese forms to 'other' Scottish culture.



Figure 2.35: Ground Floor of Scotland Street School, 1903-1906 (author's photograph)



Figure 2.36: Fireplace, for the Drawing Room, 120 Mains Street, Glasgow, 1900 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)



Figure 2.37: Chairs in Drawing room of The Mackintosh House, Glasgow – a reconstruction of 6 Florentine Terrace with additional pieces (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015)

However, this very 'othering' could also support Mackintosh's alteration and adaptation of Scottish culture to modernity. This can be inferred in his 'Scottish Baronial Architecture' paper:

From some recent buildings which have been erected it is clearly evident that this [Scottish Baronial] style is coming to life again and I only hope that it will not be strangled in its infancy by indiscriminating / and unsympathetic people who copy the ancient examples without trying to make the style conform to modern requirements.<sup>189</sup>

Mackintosh did not use indigenous styles to reject modernity; he was committed to it. Part of the purpose of his Japanese inflections was most likely to allow Scottish Baronial architecture to adapt to modernity, creating even more simplified, rectilinear forms. In Mackintosh's work, there is not a denial of the industrial or imperial ties between Scotland and Japan – indeed, the roof of the Museum in the Glasgow School of Art bears a striking resemblance to the frame of a hull of a boat (Figure 2.38), which may well be a reference to Glasgow's shipping industry and imperial prosperity. Instead, Mackintosh presents a modernity that relies on traditional Scottish (and Japanese) culture, interrogating stadialist understandings of the relationship between modernity and Celticism. It is unsurprising that Geddes admired the Glasgow School of Art building so much: the building embodies his belief in harmonising the traditions

<sup>189</sup> Mackintosh, 'Scotch Baronial Architecture', p. 63.

of the 'Celtic world' with the new world of 'industrial and practical initiative'.<sup>190</sup> Indeed, he praised the building for getting its 'effects with the sternest of modern conditions [...] never was concrete more concrete, steel more steely'.<sup>191</sup> Mackintosh's designs provide some of the most sophisticated expressions of Scottish cultural nationalism in this period – one that does not subvert Scotland's imperial or industrial identity but does subvert the marginalisation of Scottish culture, embodying the tentative nationalism that developed in Scotland which distanced, but did not divorce, Scotland from the metropole.



Figure 2.38: Roof of Museum, Glasgow School of Art, c.1910 (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))

## 2.5 Conclusion

In 1911, at the Scottish National Exhibition in Kelvingrove Park, the Japanese Tea Garden was positioned beside An Clachan, the Highland Village, and across from the Irish Dairy Cottages. To the visitors then, this may not have seemed so incongruous. The Celtic identity and its artistic community evidently found international solidarity through their cultural yoking with Japan. For Scotland, the import and fusion of

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<sup>190</sup> [T-GED 5/2/9]

<sup>191</sup> [T-GED 5/3/70].

Japanese culture with the nation's own traditional styles provided an orientalism that could bolster cultural nationalism in a particular way. As with Belgium, it could help 'other' the nation by identifying the nation's cultures with those on the margins. As Ysanne Holt has noted, the Japanese artist was in 'essential harmony' with Celticism.<sup>192</sup> However, the Japanese cultural connection also emerged from and reflected Scotland's close industrial ties with Japan – these were not resisted. Unlike many in Ireland, Scottish cultural nationalists did not imagine Scotland as a colony – they were happy to design a cultural friendship that normalised industrial ties and contributed to a wider context of celebrating modernity, industry and empire. Japan's traditional culture could also be used to support modernisation in Scotland. While Belgium provided a model for the structure of Scottish cultural nationalism as well as a vocabulary for the 'triumph of barbarism', the Japanese link (while too supporting these ideas) also expressed a different aspect of the movement: a celebration of Scottish industrialism. Scottish cultural nationalists fostered proximities to suit their agenda. Cross-cultural yokings became a key means of inspiring and supporting the *fin-de-siècle* Scots Renaissance. By seeing how others distanced themselves from the metropole by returning to their origins, these cultural nationalists began looking to Scotland's own origins to build national myths. Such returns to origins are the central concern of the next chapter.

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<sup>192</sup> Holt, p. 7; incidentally, many classic and contemporary Scottish texts have been translated into Japanese, and Minkeo Matsamura's translations of Fiona Macleod were published in a third edition in 2005 – it was, and may well remain, a 'mutual othering'.

### **3 Developing National Origins: Neo-Paganism and Enlightenment Materialism**

*There are still two things left for me to do! One is carry Home Rule – the other is to prove the intimate connection between the Hebrew and Olympian revelations!*  
(Gladstone)

### 3.1 Introduction

As the last chapter demonstrated, the identification of Scotland with 'the Orient' was partly used by Scottish cultural nationalists as a means to distance (although not divorce) the nation from narratives of improvement and civilisation that were felt to be dividing the nation (discussed in Chapter 1) and supported a Celtic rebranding of Scottish culture and a willed return to an imagined past. As in Ireland, 'international colloquy' was essential for inspiration and developing a counter-hegemony, finding common cause with other supposedly backward cultures, that could nurture Scottish cultural nationalism.

Nevertheless, cultural nationalists were actively engaged in developing a sense of the nation's own 'indigenous origins'.<sup>1</sup> Besides associating the nation with other cultures, *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalists were keen to (re)develop and (re)present collective myths and histories for Scotland. Ethno-symbolism, as articulated by Anthony D. Smith, highlights that national consciousness is not simply created through the institutions of modernity but also through symbolic resources, 'myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritage'.<sup>2</sup> These various facets together create a shared cultural memory which is central to the existence of the nation, forming an 'ethnie' – an imagined community joined by shared memories and ancestry, and an association with a homeland (pp. 12-13). These memories are not fixed: ethnic communities evolve by rediscovering and reappropriating their pasts and myths of descent. Smith argues that this reappropriation is done to 'utilise ethnic culture for social and political ends' through intellectuals seeking to 'furnish the community with "maps," both cognitive and territorial, and "moralities," both

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<sup>1</sup> Luke Gibbons, 'Peripheral Modernities: National and Global in a Post-Colonial Frame', *Nineteenth Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 29 (2007), 271-281 (p. 273).

<sup>2</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 9 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].



individual and collective, for its new destiny'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, they do not simply form nations but allow them to build and adapt. Smith also argues that these 'ethnies' will always involve an appeal to a 'golden age' of heroism, one that binds people and helps 'regenerate' the community, although these golden ages too are adaptable and reflect the contemporary context.<sup>4</sup> At the core of ethno-symbolist views on nationalism is the importance of collective association with the past and the return to, and re-imagining of, it to build the nation.

These final three chapters of the thesis will examine Scottish cultural nationalists' willed returns to the past, and their representations of the return of the past, as a means to create particular myths of descent for the nation that could unify the people through a common imagined past and overcome the national divisions discussed in Chapter 1. In doing this, these three chapters will outline the particular performance of nation-building in Scotland and examine the interactions between these projects and *fin-de-siècle* Decadence, which was often underpinned by willed returns that challenged stadialist narratives of teleological progress. Three aspects of Scottish *ethnie*-building will be treated over the next three chapters, the three most prevalent and widely evident. Chapter 3 considers how paganism was used to not only form a collection of symbols for Scotland but to design an imagined origin, rooted in heroes, that reflected the desire to recover Scottish identity but not to fully dissociate it from Britain. Chapter 4 examines how cultural nationalists returned to occult spheres and used the language of the hidden to demonstrate the underlying continuation of Scottish or Celtic identity and the need to recover it. Chapter 5 shows how they used pageantry to perform the past and more widely disseminate their myths of dissent and develop a further one: Arthurian Scotland. This pursuit of origins, as has and will be further demonstrated, still interacted with other nations: Scotland's use of Egypt in Chapter 4 and Hellenic Paganism in this chapter attest to

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

the fact that associations with other cultures inspired Scottish cultural nationalists to subvert notions of stadial teleology and develop a distinct sense of origin.

'Developing National Origins' considers how the rise of neo-paganism in the late nineteenth century supported Scottish cultural nationalists' willed return to the past and their attempts to construct a distinct 'ethnie' that reflected the desired position of Scotland: an autonomous but imperial culture. The return of paganism, and earlier forms of Christianity, was often considered a key trait of 1890s Decadence in the period: enthusiasm for ideologies centred on the mysterious, the symbolic and the collective over those focussed on positivism, the scientific and the individual was 'the most distinctive stigma of the degenerate' for Nordau.<sup>5</sup> This aspect of Decadence was highly influential on the development of the Scottish movement, as the chapter demonstrates. It is argued that through neo-paganism Scottish cultural nationalists developed a mythic past to unify the collective, one that was defined by images of synthesis and defence rather than combat. This was distinct from some forms of neo-paganism in Ireland: for instance, Patrick Pearse could use the Celtic pagan hero, Cuchullin, to inspire nationalist militancy – discussed in Chapter 5. Furthermore, Scottish neo-paganism often hybridised the Celtic past with Classical, Mediterranean paganisms, as is demonstrated in the discussion on the University Hall murals. By doing this, a more flexible and less autochthonous neo-paganism developed. Nevertheless, Scottish neo-paganism was similar to Ireland's in that it created a collective symbolism for the nation, a myth of descent, often by sharing myths with Ireland and could be a means of partially re-entering earlier forms of Christianity – evident in the Fiona Macleod works. The chapter will also consider the attempts to mock neo-paganism and the strengthening of a Scottish imagined community, so clearly evident in John Davidson's writings.

This chapter will treat the first research question, on the extent to which these writers' and artists' work reflected their political and historical contexts, in detail by demonstrating the differences between the performance of neo-paganism in Scotland

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<sup>5</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1895), p. 111.

and Ireland and how these differences reflected particular socio-political circumstances, through John Duncan's Ramsay Garden murals and William Sharp's writings. Furthermore, it will examine how neo-paganism was partially used to question Enlightenment narratives of progress, particularly in Geddes's and Sharp's work. These discussions will also demonstrate the interaction between Decadence and cultural nationalism since neo-paganism – frequently associated with Decadence and degeneracy around the 1890s – was a key concept for developing cultural nationalism, not just in Scotland but throughout Europe. This chapter will also touch on the third question as it will demonstrate that common views were shared across Scotland between the likes of Geddes, Duncan and Sharp while the discussion on John Davidson, who resisted Scottish cultural nationalism, proves that the movement was widely recognised in the period.

### **3.2 Paganism and National Identity on the British Isles**

The neo-paganism that developed in the late nineteenth century across Europe was symptomatic of several contextual issues. Christopher Wood argues that various cultures returned to antiquity as a response to 'the ugliness, materialism and industrialism of their own age', as the Decadents did.<sup>6</sup> This is an over-simplification as many figures were returning to ancient Rome and Greece for 'paradigms and reference points' regarding imperialism, industry and politics – the pre-Christian world could support the Victorian middle class's narratives of progress, civilisation and decline too.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, neo-paganism was often framed as a disruptive return to the past. William Barry, in his essay 'Neo-Paganism' writes: 'It must be well understood that disciples of the school known as Decadent, though by no means classic in a noble sense, are unquestionably Pagan'.<sup>8</sup> For Barry, Decadent neo-paganism was the

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher Wood, *Olympian Dreamers: Victorian Classical Painters 1860-1914* (London: Constable and Company, 1983), p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Norman Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> William Barry, *Heralds of Revolt: Studies in Modern Literature and Dogma* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p. 295.

ignoble return to antiquity, the return that challenged notions of progress and civilisation. This understanding underpins this chapter's definition of the term: neo-paganism was the *fin-de-siècle* interest in and recovery of the symbols, figures and ideas associated with the pre-Christian world, underpinned by a desire to complicate or subvert the culture of industrial and imperial progress. Neo-paganism often involved performing willed returns to the past, re-activating ideas associated with the pre-Christian period in the present and, even, mixing the images and ideas of the Christian and the pre-Christian. Allied to certain forms of Decadence, the neo-pagan movement offered space to foster counter-cultures.

In the late-Victorian period when there were increasing doubts about Christianity, archaeological discoveries and shifts in the politics of identity, the pagan world became more appealing, particularly to those dissatisfied with or alienated by contemporary culture. What the pagan past offered were examples of different societies, examples that could be drawn from to rupture the present. Not only did it provide alternatives to Christianity but it could bolster other ideas too. Jennifer Hallett has argued that neo-paganism supported Edward Carpenter's socialism;<sup>9</sup> it also provided ideological structures to legitimise same-sex love (as in Symonds's, Carpenter's, Crowley's, R. Murray Gilchrist's and Forster's cases)<sup>10</sup> and feminist views (as will be demonstrated with Sharp). In both literature and lifestyle, several figures used the pagan past to authenticate, or provide an historical basis for, their unorthodox ideas, styles and customs that subverted Victorian middle class ideals. Contrary to Owen Davies's judgement that 'until the 20<sup>th</sup> century people did not call themselves pagans',<sup>11</sup> several identified themselves as pagan in the late nineteenth

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<sup>9</sup> Jennifer Hallett, 'Wandering Dreams and Social Marches: Varieties of Paganism in Late Victorian and Edwardian England', in *Paganism: Critical Concepts in Religious Studies*, ed. by Barbara Jane Davy, 3 vols (London: Routledge, 2009), I, pp. 119-220 (pp. 199-200).

<sup>10</sup> Terry L. Meyers, *The Sexual Tensions of William Sharp: A Study of the Birth of Fiona Macleod, Incorporating Two Lost Works, Ariadne in Naxos and Beatrice* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 49-52; Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 216.

<sup>11</sup> Owen Davies, *Paganism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 1.

century, including Sharp.<sup>12</sup> These figures that identified themselves as pagan very rarely did so to worship nature but to legitimise their alternative views or lifestyles.

This return to the pagan past rarely functioned independently; it often worked alongside the return to occult spheres, which is discussed in Chapter 4. Like neo-paganism, occultism often involved challenging narratives of civilisation and commercialism and thus they could mutually support each other. As will be demonstrated when considering the Fiona Macleod writings, Sharp's de-stabilising of gendered roles had ties to Kabbalistic characterisations of the soul as 'androgynous'.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the Fiona identity itself was partly a product of neo-paganism and occultism.

One use of neo-paganism, to legitimise and authenticate ideas, was its role in the development of cultural nationalism. The importance of returning to pre-Christian culture to authenticate a national identity has been identified throughout European cultures (by Davies and others) but there are particularities to each instance and how different nations developed specific forms of cultural nationalism requires greater attention. This chapter will argue that neo-paganism could support Scottish cultural nationalism in two ways: it could dramatise Scotland's distance from the metropole, like *japonisme* did – as discussed in Chapter 2, while it could also help define and disseminate a distinctive national myth of origin, essential to creating a united collective identity. The first, neo-paganism's capacity to help 'other' Scotland, becomes clear when the relationship between England and the pagan past is considered. In this period, the idea that England had moved beyond the pagan 'stage', while the Celtic nations were still connected to paganism in certain ways, was circulating. To normalise this idea could help distinguish the Celtic national cultures from England.

In order to understand how Scotland could 'other' itself by celebrating recovering pagan images, the perceived tension between Victorian English cultural identity and paganism in the period needs to be understood. Charles Kingsley, in his novel *Hypatia* (1853) and other writings, engages with the Classical world in order to

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<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), p. 197.

<sup>13</sup> S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (London: Arkana, 1991), p. 34.

develop a cultural identity for English Protestantism. The novel charts the progression of the pagan lecturer, Hypatia, through a spiritual crisis, a development that results in her death. It is a Christian Apologia but, although it is a statement on the baseness of non-Platonist paganism, it is also strongly anti-Catholic in tone: the 'heathen' pagan world was 'indescribable' in its sin but the Early Church was equally 'heinous'.<sup>14</sup> Kingsley associates the Egyptian Christians with the features of Catholicism that he disdained in contemporary Anglo-Catholicism, namely celibacy and abstinence which 'brought serious evils from the first',<sup>15</sup> he wrote in 1864, while he also evokes the aggression of Early Christians.<sup>16</sup> There is a conflation of backwardness with both paganism and Early Christianity. He believed that these religions could only be saved by the Teutons: a Northern (Protestant) Christianity to remedy the excesses of Catholicism. For Kingsley, Protestantism was the defender of 'national attitude',<sup>17</sup> not the Roman Empire which fused 'races, languages, and customs' or Catholicism.<sup>18</sup> Despite their conflict in *Hypatia*, there is an association of paganism with Early Christianity: a grouping that, for Kingsley, defined a stage that had gladly been surpassed by Protestantism and should not be challenged by Victorian Anglo-Catholics. Kingsley replays stadial structures: ritual magic is a stage that must give way to superior Protestantism and he strongly associates the Teutons with this more advanced stage, in comparison to the 'Irish or Neopolitan savage'.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that Kingsley's stance was attacked by John Henry Newman, a leader in the Oxford Movement, who wrote a response to *Hypatia – Callista* (1855). In 1845, Newman wrote that Protestants were over-preoccupied with 'mere civilization' and had little capacity for spiritual salvation,<sup>20</sup> while demonstrating how pagan belief

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Hypatia: or, New Foes with an Old Face* (London: John W. Parker, 1853), p. vii.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), p. 241.

<sup>16</sup> Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 203.

<sup>17</sup> *The Roman and the Teuton*, p. 263.

<sup>18</sup> *Hypatia*, p. xi.

<sup>19</sup> (cited in) Susann Dorman, 'Hypatia and Callista: The Initial Skirmish between Kingsley and Newman', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 34.2 (1979), 173-193 (p. 190).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

foreshadowed Christian belief.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Kingsley's notion that England embodied a stage beyond paganism took hold with many.

The tension between the pre-Christian world and English identity is evident throughout the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For several cultural figures, paganism was almost exclusively found outside of England or portrayed as antithetical to England's present 'stage'. For instance, Matthew Arnold contrasted Greece to the 'rude ground' of industrial England.<sup>22</sup> In *Culture and Anarchy*, he also argued that England's culture had become defined by Christian Herbraism (especially since the Reformation) which foregrounded discipline and self-sacrifice over pagan Hellenism, which celebrated the 'spontaneity of consciousness'.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Pater imagines Sparta as England 'idealised'; as Richard Jenkyns argues of Pater, Greece represents what England could be, were it not 'weakened by the industrial revolution'.<sup>24</sup> Wilde too frequently dramatises the differences and distance between England and pagan gods, as in the poem 'Panthea': 'There [the dwelling of the pagan gods] never does that dreary north-wind blow / Which leaves our English forests bleak and bare' (ll. 61-62).<sup>25</sup> In his poem 'Before a Crucifix' (1871), Swinburne, who frequently used his poetry to escape to a Mediterranean pagan past, perhaps goes furthest in portraying the 'rottenness and rust' of an oppressive industrialism from which Christianity offered no reprieve.<sup>26</sup> His was a rare neo-paganism that was pointedly anti-Christian. For several cultural figures in England, there was a longing for the pagan past, a longing which acknowledged the fact that England had become too industrial and commercial to connect to it. Many represented England as a place where 'The Gods are dead' (Wilde, 'Santa Decca', l. 1).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), p. 373.

<sup>22</sup> (cited in) Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1980), p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1869), pp. 162-163, 173.

<sup>24</sup> *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, p. 223; in a period when the Victorians were struggling to bind their love for Hellenism with their own culture and Christianity, Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* is culturally significant as it demonstrates the conversion towards, but not to, Christianity (Goldhill, p. 220).

<sup>25</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Complete Poetry*, ed. by Isobel Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 92-96 (p.94)

<sup>26</sup> Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Poems and Prose* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1940), pp. 195-201 (l. 140).

<sup>27</sup> Wilde, p. 29.

A notion was also circulating in the period that the pagan past could only be experienced by the English if it was imported or if they travelled from England, confirming the representations of England as disconnected from paganism. In Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan*, published initially by *The Whirlwind* in 1890 followed by the Bodley Head in 1894, Pan is portrayed as living in a remote wood which, although not stated, is almost certainly in Wales: not only do the initial descriptions of the country surrounding Dr Raymond's house and the village Mary lives in correspond to his descriptions of Wales in the introduction – which he tells us provided the 'fountains of [his] story' –<sup>28</sup> but the final fragments reveal that Helen (the daughter of Mary and Pan) lived in Caermaen. A threatening paganism is imported into England through Mary's encounter with Pan in Wales. This idea was replayed in the Edwardian period, when it was even more firmly believed (as Christopher Wood notes) that 'the old gods were dead'.<sup>29</sup> Forster's short stories dramatise the inability of paganism and English identity to cohabit the same space. In 'The Story of a Panic' (1904), set in Italy, a particularly priggish Englishman, the narrator Mr Tytler, cannot understand or believe in the occupation of a young boy, Eustace, by the pagan spirit, which enters him amongst the woods. His experiences are simply dismissed as symptomatic of the 'Southern mind'.<sup>30</sup> The man of English nationality refuses to understand, or is unable to identify with, paganism. These ideas are revisited in Forster's 'Other Kingdom' (1909), where the English male (Mr Worters) seeks to 'civilise' the copse he has acquired, Other Kingdom, for his fiancée with paths and bridges. However, his fiancée Miss Beaumont, who has been brought back from Ireland and defends learning the Classics, rejects this. She not only has a closer contact with the environment than the other characters but physically becomes the trees: she disappears, spiritually and materially immersed within them, by the end of the story. Forster's short stories most clearly exhibit the proximity of Catholic and Celtic peoples to paganism and lament the English nationality's divorce from it. As in D. H. Lawrence's 'Pan in America' (1936),

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Machen, *The Great God Pan and the Hill of Dreams* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Wood, p. 257.

<sup>30</sup> E. M. Forster, *Selected Stories*, ed. by David Leavitt and Mark Mitchell (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 21.



paganism is elsewhere and can only be experienced by others abroad: for Lawrence, it is only in America that old Pan 'is still alive'.<sup>31</sup>

One figure who does successfully unite Hellenism with cultural identity formation in England is Edward Burne-Jones. His paintings often represent Hellenic bodies in Medievalist backgrounds, with strong Arthurian links. For example, in 'The Beguiling of Merlin' (1872-77) Niume, the Lady of the Lake, has a Grecian-style face and wears drapery that exposes the form of her body and stands in a contrapposto position, two features typical of Classical sculpture. This fusing of Classical and Medieval tropes is not surprising here considering Burne-Jones, like many of the Pre-Raphaelites, was concerned with forming an Arthurian, Celtic understanding of Britain, a pre-Teutonic Britain, which was thus less hostile to paganism. Furthermore, unlike other painters of the period, such as Leighton and Alma-Tadema, Burne-Jones explored the vitalist, inchoate and chthonic aspects of Classical culture, tending to reject Olympian subject matters by representing the likes of Pan instead: for instance in *Pan and Psyche* (1872-1874). It is clear why Scottish cultural nationalists (including Geddes and Sharp) went on to celebrate Burne-Jones's work: he and other Pre-Raphaelites provided an artistic model for at least complicating Teutonic narratives of British ethnicity through returning to pre-Christian tradition.

Due to the focus in Victorian Studies on English literature, alternative neo-paganisms in the British Isles have struggled to surface in the discipline. Indeed, a significant problem with recent criticism on neo-paganism in Victorian Studies has been the almost singular understanding of neo-paganism as the 'use of images and ideas from the ancient pre-Christian Mediterranean world'.<sup>32</sup> This overlooks the various Celtic neo-paganisms that existed across the British Isles. These neo-paganisms did not find a lack of pagan identity in the Celtic nations but, instead, paganism was represented as part of the autochthonous self. For instance, Arthur Machen associated Wales with pagan identity. This is evident in *The Great God Pan*,

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<sup>31</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Pan in America', in *Green History: A Reader in Environmental Literature, Philosophy and Politics*, ed. by Derek Wall (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 81-83 (p. 82).

<sup>32</sup> Hallett, p. 161.

as has been demonstrated, but also in 'The Novel of the Black Seal' (1895). Here, Professor Gregg takes a house near Caermean, a land 'more unknown to the Englishmen than the very heart of Africa',<sup>33</sup> to investigate a black stone. We learn that he discovers the 'little people' of Celtic legend, who are of a different race and are associated with 'ancient Babylon'.<sup>34</sup> The Celtic territories are represented as sites of ethnic preservation and paganism, akin to Buchan's 'No Man's Land' (1898) and Conan Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Devil's Foot', discussed in Chapter 1.

This notion that there were survivals of an earlier ethnicity and mythology in these Celtic territories could play into the development of national identity and the cultural politics of nationalism as they helped authenticate the Celtic nations' distance from England and supported defining their myths of descent. Celtic neo-paganism in the 1890s could also very strikingly be used as a basis on which to build particular *ethnies* in parts of the British Isles and support counter-cultures that resisted Anglo-centrism.

In his essay 'Contemporary Evolution' (1873), St. George Jackson Mivart acknowledges that the locality of pagan customs could support re-emergences of cultural nationalism; he writes that 'Paganism was especially national'.<sup>35</sup> For Mivart, Christian Theocracy stood in opposition to the emergence of national forms of religion as it was often expansionist and only superficially rooted in locality. He states that Christianity did try to establish National Theocracies but these were simply 'naked self-assertion'.<sup>36</sup> Mivart ignores the great impact that national forms of Christianity had in *fin-de-siècle* nationalisms but there is evidence to prove that, throughout Europe, nations – such as Lithuania – were turning to pre-Christian customs and myths to provide bases for new (or reviving) forms of collective identity.<sup>37</sup> By returning to the spirit and even customs of their pre-Christian societies, cultural nationalists could help develop 'ethnies' for their nations.

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<sup>33</sup> Arthur Machen, *The White People and Other Weird Stories*, ed. by S. T. Johsi (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>35</sup> St George Mivart, 'Contemporary Evolution: Part II', *Contemporary Review*, 23 (1873), 346-362 (p. 347).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360.

<sup>37</sup> Davies, p. 115.

This was certainly the case with Ireland: Irish cultural nationalists sought to distance themselves from the metropole by developing and circulating a particular collection of symbols and figures to unify the nation (from Fionn to Cathleen ni Houlihan to the Children of Lir) which has been well-documented in Irish Studies. As Mary Helen Thuente argues, Irish pagan folklore was a key apparatus for Irish nationalism, particularly for the likes of Lady Wilde and Douglas Hyde.<sup>38</sup> Contrary to Mivart's claim, Irish neo-paganism was often closely aligned with Catholicism. William Breslin noted this in his essay 'Pagan Ireland' which argued that there had been a fusion of Catholic and pagan belief in Ireland and that these allied ideologies became a fuel for projects that sought to culturally, as well as politically, define the nation.<sup>39</sup> This political dimension was rarely evident in Scotland (or Wales) where the Celtic pagan revival was primarily used to further cultural nationalism. For Scotland and other Celtic nations, 'the "Celtic spirit" stood in defiance of the centralising imperatives of London and Paris'.<sup>40</sup> The Celtic Revival's stress was mainly on preserving culture, on 'othering' and defining the Celtic nations, but (with Ireland predominantly) it could also involve reclaiming sovereignty and developing militancy. Particular comparisons with Ireland are important for this study as several Scottish cultural nationalists (namely Geddes) supported reclaiming some form of political autonomy for Scotland and Ireland, although they expressed this idea hesitantly. They also used a very similar mythic vocabulary to those in Ireland. In order to understand the form and tone of neo-paganism in Scotland, comparisons with the Irish movement must be made. These will be traced in this chapter and throughout the next two.

### **3.3 The University Hall Murals: Scottish Neo-Paganism and Stadialism**

In Scotland a particular form of neo-paganism developed. The following two sections of the chapter demonstrate that neo-paganism was a means of developing a particular

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<sup>38</sup> Mary Helen Thuente, *W. B. Yeats and Irish Folklore* (Totowa: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p. 63-73.

<sup>39</sup> J. William Breslin, 'Pagan Ireland', *Westminster Review*, 147 (1897), 247-253.

<sup>40</sup> Barry Cunliffe, *Druids: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 123.

*ethnie* for Geddes, Duncan and Sharp, one that was more concerned with recovering the status of the Celt and Scot, undermining narratives that tried to marginalise peoples, rather than challenging England – reflecting the distinct socio-political position of Scotland in the period. Their work also demonstrates that neo-paganism could permit enthusiasm for the Early Church which, in turn, could distance Scottish cultural identity from Protestantism. This point is significant as it has been argued by scholars of Scottish Modernism that part of the later cultural nationalist project (from the 1920s onwards) involved an appeal to a 'pre-Reformation cultural forms',<sup>41</sup> which was particularly evident in Muir's and MacDiarmid's work: MacDiarmid saw the Reformation as 'a blight on Scottish arts and affairs' and Muir describes the 'desolation' of Knox and Melville in 'Scotland 1941'.<sup>42</sup> This chapter argues that, while this is true of the Scottish Renaissance, we can trace this new enthusiasm with pre-Reformation religious forms in Scotland back to the 1890s. However, the chapter also demonstrates that there were differences: for instance, Geddes and Sharp, who were critics of Calvinism, did not idealise the pre-Protestant period of Dunbar and Henryson to the extent that Muir and MacDiarmid did (although Geddes does celebrate Blind Harry's *Wallace* in 'The Scots Renaissance') but primarily looked to pagan and Early Christian periods. *Fin-de-siècle* cultural nationalists aimed to critique stadialism and return not simply to the past but to the origin and demonstrate its interaction with modern life. In doing this, they attempted to reform the terms of Scotland's nationality, seeking to bind and distinguish the people through a common mythical past and did so in a way that reflected Scotland's socio-political circumstances.

Geddes was keen to make Edinburgh a centre of Celtic culture, countering the Teutonic and stadial narratives of Edinburgh developed since the Enlightenment, discussed in Chapter 1. Perhaps the clearest example of this is Duncan and Geddes's mural scheme for the Common Room of University Hall, the student halls of residence established by Geddes, at Ramsay Lodge – once the home of Allan Ramsay, adjacent

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<sup>41</sup> Scott Lyall, "'That Ancient Self': Scottish Modernism's Counter-Renaissance', *European Journal of English Studies*, 18.1 (2014), 73-85 (p. 83).

<sup>42</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, 81; Edwin Muir, 'Scotland 1941', in *Scottish Literature in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed. by David McCordick (Dalkeith: Scottish Cultural Press, 2002), p. 255 (l. 12).

to Edinburgh Castle's esplanade. University Hall, which grew from just three small flats in Mount Place in 1887 to over forty, was designed to bring students together and offer an alternative atmosphere for learning. As the artist James Cadenhead, who lived in the Halls at Edinburgh for two winters, wrote, they encouraged 'learning the Art of living sociably, of how to behave as a social unit'.<sup>43</sup> The Hall grew so large that its responsibilities were eventually taken over by the Town and Gown Association, and this Association went on to develop a similar initiative in London: More's Garden at Chelsea.<sup>44</sup> Ramsay Lodge was decorated in many ways, through decorations by Helen Hay, Helen Baxter and Marion Mason, amongst others, and these numerous pieces signify the importance of the space for Geddes. The murals for the Common Room, which featured in *The Studio's* article on 'Mural Decoration in Scotland' (1897), in particular reveal Geddes's and Duncan's interest in using neo-paganism to represent willed returns of the past that openly subvert stadialism, provide a mythological origin and build up a common set of images for the nation.

To understand these mural designs, we must situate them in context of Geddes's wider project. Geddes focussed on elevating the position of the Celt and unifying the nation (by complicating stadial notions of 'civilisation'). The Outlook Tower, based beside Ramsay Lodge, was founded by Geddes in 1892 and designed to be an artistic centre that could 'arrest the tremendous centralising power of the metropolis of London',<sup>45</sup> supporting Scotland's and Edinburgh's unique voices and their interaction with the world. Although a mild advocate of Home Rule, Geddes was primarily interested in bolstering Scotland's cultural and civic autonomy and critiquing stadialism, which is reflected in the visual aspects of the Outlook Tower.

Geddes had three windows installed for the stair landings at the Outlook Tower: *The Valley Section*, *Arbor Saeculorum – Tree of Life* and *Lapis Philosophorum – Philosopher's Stone* (c.1895). His writings on the first two demonstrate how

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<sup>43</sup> James Cadenhead, [untitled paper], c.1912 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/167].

<sup>44</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Semi-Jubilee of University Hall', c.1912 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/167].

<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), p. 249.

interested he was in rejecting stadial teleology. *The Valley Section* was a geographic model that Geddes used throughout his career, which demonstrated the typical uses of land in geographic regions, from forestry to commerce. However, Geddes's diagram does not advocate 'progress' from one use to another but showcases the dependence of each component of a geographic region on another: 'it takes the whole region to make a city'.<sup>46</sup> In 'The Valley Section', a posthumous reproduction of talks he gave in 1925, he elaborates on this point. He critiques those who would style Neolithic miners as 'barbarians' and instead highlights that they were the 'essential founders of most of the main elements of our present civilization'.<sup>47</sup> He repeatedly reclaims the significance of non-commercial aspects of society: the hunter is no 'rude survivor of primitive society, but a type of permanent and increasing significance in history' (p. 66). He even makes a direct attack on stadialists and their 'the bookish habit to speak of [...] successive 'stages' [...] And these too simply as 'phases' before the present predominance of the industrial and commercial urban order' (p. 68). He rebukes this: 'all these fundamental occupations we have always with us' (p. 68). For Geddes, 'the peaceful agricultural world outlives all', which symbolises 'the victory of the peasant' (p. 69), and he calls on peoples to look to their pasts and recognise that they are 'citizens of no mean city' (p. 69), a sentiment Fanon would later express in his critique of colonial stadialism. This celebration of the peasant, which would resurface during the later Scottish Renaissance in the form of *Sunset Song* (1932), resonates with Smith's belief that, for ethno-symbolists, the peasant is 'sacred',<sup>48</sup> embodying continuity of the ethnicity and the 'myth of descent'. It is no surprise that Geddes and Branford supported the scout movement in the early twentieth century for recapitulating the 'primitive hunting life' and that Geddes wanted his children to learn from 'the stones of the common people' over public schooling.<sup>49</sup> Geddes's *Valley*

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<sup>46</sup> (cited in) Paddy Kitchen, *A Most Unsettling Person: An Introduction to the Ideas and Life of Patrick Geddes* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975), p. 138.

<sup>47</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Valley Section', *Architect's Yearbook*, 12 (1968), 65-71 (p. 66) [future references to this issue are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Myths*, p. 85.

<sup>49</sup> Victor Branford and Patrick Geddes, *The Coming Polity: A Study in Reconstruction* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1917), p. 106; Patrick Geddes, 'Keltic Art', 26 July 1899, p. 6 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/7].

*Section* window is a visual representation of the mutual dependence of the parts and occupations of the geographic region. Similarly, in his writings on the *Arbor Saeculorum* design, he highlights that, although it represents various stages of history, the tree is 'perpetually renewed' from its roots and that 'the spirals of smoke which curl among its branches' are representative of the blindness of 'thinkers and workers of each successive age to the thought and work of their precursors'.<sup>50</sup> For Geddes, it is important that progress is not imagined in opposition to the past, or city life is imagined in opposition to rural life; for him, they are mutually dependent and synthetic. In these windows, we find 'retrogressions' to counter 'unilinear evolutionism'.<sup>51</sup>

It is unsurprising that Geddes forcefully dismisses one of the Scottish Enlightenment's most celebrated stadial thinkers (Adam Smith) in his essay 'Political Economy and Fine Art'. Here, Geddes argues that the encouragement of art is central to national and municipal economies and states that Smith had no notion of the economy of art or municipal feeling, mainly due to his upbringing in 'neglected' Kirkcaldy and his education at Glasgow and Oxford, 'probably those two of all universities whatsoever where gownsmen were, in various ways, most separated from townsmen'.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, *The Wealth of Nations* is 'destitute' of 'artistic knowledge, sympathy, or sentiment', leaving but a 'dismal science' (p. 3). Geddes praises the socialist schools who have pointed out that the supposed 'progress' of this form of political economy is in fact 'degraded' (p. 4) but reserves particular praise for John Ruskin's revival of art's importance to wider society. Geddes critiques social models based on 'individual competition', 'high living and plain thinking', that look down on social co-operation as antagonistic to 'real business' (p. 2). He demands a more collective society – 'private simplicity and public magnificence' (p. 3) – where that society sees art as integral. Elsewhere, he expresses the view that this synthesis, and

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<sup>50</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Arbor Saeculorum' [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/397].

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Myths*, p. 67.

<sup>52</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Political Economy and Fine Art', *Scottish Art Review*, 2 (1889), 2-4 (p. 3) [future references to this issue are given in brackets after quotations].

a 'democratic', 'costless' art, can only be found in Celtic culture and celebrates how the Celtic Cross can displace 'the tombstone of commerce'.<sup>53</sup>

Such critiques of the 'paleotechnic finance' as Geddes branded it, which prioritised competition,<sup>54</sup> were highly akin to the Decadent critiques of the commercialism and utilitarianism of the Victorian middle class, outlined in the Introduction; like Sharp and Mackintosh, Geddes resisted what Baudelaire sarcastically called 'the glorious country of Utilitarianism'.<sup>55</sup> Geddes's political economy needs to be considered in the context of Decadence as he discussed Decadence himself and believed that it could support his civic projects and resist cultures built around 'paleotechnic finance'. For the second volume of *The Evergreen* (Autumn),<sup>56</sup> Geddes wanted there to be an essay that treated Decadence 'critically yet appreciatively', which he eventually wrote himself.<sup>57</sup> The essay is concerned with synthesis and expresses disdain for 'the golden age of Competition', supposed "'economic progress'", which has engendered slum dwellings.<sup>58</sup> In the final two parts of the essay, he outlines how Aestheticism and Decadence could be key vehicles in moving towards synthesis and 'Renaissance', potentially a reference to his cultural nationalist 'The Scots Renaissance' essay he published in the previous issue. He writes:

It is time to come to another great doctrine of the Decadence. [...] For the aesthetic appreciation of the world-phantasmagoria, the questioning intellect must be calmed, the call to action ignored; the rich variety and contrast of modern life must be impartially observed, dispassionately absorbed; and hence sheltered amid the wealth and comfort of our city life our aesthete develops as never before, his impressionist mirror growing more and more perfect in its polished calm. So develop new subtleties of sense; and given this wealth of impressions, this perfection of sensibility, new combinations must weave themselves in the fantasias of reverie. Our new Merlins thus brighten our winter with their gardens of dream. (p. 36)

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<sup>53</sup> Patrick Geddes, untitled paper on the Celtic Cross, pp. 1, 8-9 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/13].

<sup>54</sup> Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915), pp. 386-387.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1995), p. 110.

<sup>56</sup> Although a seasonal, *The Evergreen's* four volumes were released over two years: Spring and Autumn in 1895 then Summer and Winter in 1896.

<sup>57</sup> Papers and correspondence relating to *The Evergreen* and Messrs. Patrick Geddes and Colleagues [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/2].

<sup>58</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', *The Evergreen*, 2 (1895), 27-38 (p. 33) [future references to this volume are given in brackets after quotations].



Here, Geddes sees the Aesthetes' or Decadents' (he uses the terms interchangeably) importance in their detachment from reality, from 'modern life', and their ability to develop fresh senses, ideas and syntheses. Geddes goes on to caution that the 'inaction' of the urban aesthete can rouse 'the morbid strain latent in every life' (p. 37) which leads to temptations: 'an orgie of strange narcotics and of the strangest sins' (p. 37). However, Geddes is keen to assert that he is not entirely opposed to Decadence: 'Is all aestheticism then evil, and only activity good? Has art only been an ignis fatuus, and is the jeer of the coarse utilitarian, the triumph of the joyless ascetic, to be the last word? Not so' (p. 37). Here, Geddes sides more with the Aesthetes than the utilitarians, which he also does in his unpublished essay 'Aesthetics'. Geddes even pays homage to Aestheticism and Decadence:

Thanks then, and even honour, to the art and science of the Decadence, since from it we have learned to see the thing as it is; it has helped us like-wise to imagine it as it might be: it remains only to ask if in some measure we can make it as it should be, and here lies intact such originality as is left open to us – that of Renascence. (p. 38)

This passage reflects J. Arthur Thomson's line earlier in this issue: 'there is fruition in the midst of decadence' and Geddes's own belief that Decadence held 'the seed of the new'.<sup>59</sup> Geddes believed a new Renascence, that rejected a political economy rooted in competition, had to take the detachment of the Decadent, along with his or her ability to dream, and develop them into a new, active cultural renascence. Geddes sympathises with the Decadents' who 'rightly' 'shrink from [the age's] active life' that is too mercantile, scientific and industrial: a society that is peopled with a different type of Decadents, 'Philistine decadents' (p. 38). As with Baudelaire, Wilde and Moore, Geddes uses the 'decadent' slur against those antagonistic to Decadence. Instead, Geddes proposes a new culture and civilisation: one which is focussed on social betterment, which 'remoulds' the world. Although Geddes can criticise Decadence at

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<sup>59</sup> J. Arthur Thomson, 'The Biology of Autumn', *The Evergreen*, 2 (1895), 9-17 (p. 17); Papers and correspondence relating to *The Evergreen* and Messrs. Patrick Geddes and Colleagues [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/2].

times, it is clear from this discussion that he is sympathetic to aspects of Decadence. He saw the Outlook Tower's Renaissance as the embodiment of the next stage which could develop out of the Decadent cultural epoch, to 'pass, through Decadence, towards Renaissance', much like Sharp who was interested in the model of Decadence leading to regeneration.<sup>60</sup> Decadence was not an end for Geddes and others but it did have a civic role to play in rejecting mere industry, commerce and progress. The cultural nationalist movement relied on Decadent ideas, styles and tropes to oppose contemporary society and imagine it anew.



Figure 3.1: John Duncan, *The Awakening of Cuchullin*, c.1895 (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))

Geddes's preoccupation with dispelling the banal and divisive aspects of the Scottish Enlightenment, and supporting synthesis through Decadence, is very clearly reflected in the neo-pagan mural designs John Duncan executed for Ramsay Lodge Common Room in the 1890s. His desire to subvert Enlightenment historiography is evident in the inscription over the door of the room alone ('As it hath been / So it shall be') as the idea of retrogression challenges teleological development. These murals comprise a series of Scottish figures and heroes from myth and history (including

<sup>60</sup> Victor V. Branford and Patrick Geddes, 'Prefatory Note', *The Evergreen*, 2 (1895), 8; Miscellaneous Prose works or drafts by William Sharp [National Library of Scotland: MS 8777].

Fionn and James Watt), forming a distinct Scottish collection of symbols, a project Yeats was also keen to develop for Ireland.<sup>61</sup> They embody many features of the Scots Renaissance and several of the figures represented are discussed in the following two chapters, including King Arthur (Figure 3.2) and his role in Scottish cultural nationalism in Chapter 5. They complemented the other cultural nationalist murals for University Hall, including one by Duncan of a naked St Andrew on the Cross, which 'shocked a custodian of the Free Church College so much that he tore the canvas'.<sup>62</sup>

Neo-paganism plays an important role in these designs, on two levels. On the first, Geddes and Duncan represent two Celtic pagan mythical figures (associated with both Scottish and Irish mythology) as part of their visual decoration: Cuchullin and Fionn. These two murals, particularly *The Awakening of Cuchullin* (Figure 3.1), demonstrate a key facet of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism. In *The Awakening*, the warrior Cuchullin stirs after being urged to sleep by his father, Lugh, drawing on the tradition of the 'sleeping hero', a tradition Geddes evokes in 'The Scots Renaissance', discussed in Chapter 5.<sup>63</sup> Jennifer Westwood has noted that 'such "sleeping heroes" are usually said to wait in enchanted slumber until the day they are needed to save their land from some enemy'.<sup>64</sup> This invocation of defence, through myth, is also evident in *Green Fire*, a novel by Sharp which mentions 'how Arthur the Celtic hero would come again out of Flath-innis, and redeem his lost, receding peoples'.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, Sharp describes the Anima Celtica figure in a similar manner, discussed in Chapter 4. The mural is an example of the 'reawakening' image that is common to *ethnie*-building projects but here it pointedly represents the defence of Scottish and Celtic culture.<sup>66</sup> The fact that the image of Cuchullin arousing from sleep is foregrounded, rather than mid-battle scenes in the background, makes it less threatening and emphasises the image's stress on the defensive, rather than the

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<sup>61</sup> Marjory Howe, *Yeats's Nations: Gender, Class, and Irishness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 70.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Richard Cammell, *Heart of Scotland* (London: Robert Hale, 1956), p. 233.

<sup>63</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Scots Renaissance', *The Evergreen*, 1 (1895), 131-139 (p. 137).

<sup>64</sup> Jennifer Westwood and Sophia Kingshill, *The Lore of Scotland: A Guide to Scottish Legends* (London: Random House Books, 2009), p. 450.

<sup>65</sup> William Sharp, *Green Fire: A Romance* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1896), p. 32.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, *Myths*, p. 68.

combative. This attempt to downplay the combative is to some extent reflected in *The Combat of Fionn* – as the two competitors represented, Fionn and Swaran, eventually dined together as friends – as well as *The Vision of Johannes Scotus Erigena* as the philosopher believed that our divine purpose was to return to ‘original unity’, overcoming division.<sup>67</sup> Typical of Scottish cultural nationalism in this period, these designs do not evoke a committed, forceful militarism but they do evoke the idea that the strength to defend is there and can be activated, reflecting one of the Scots Renaissance’s objectives: to defend Scotland’s cultural autonomy and Celtic identity.<sup>68</sup> They express the alternative to ‘militant nationality’ that Geddes strived for.<sup>69</sup> Pre-Christian myth was not used here to represent ‘a fading civilization’, as Murray Pittock argues,<sup>70</sup> but to distinguish the nation – while still expressing bonds with Ireland and England through the subjects chosen – and embody its revival: the use of the fire and light motif throughout the murals (that Clare Willsdon notes) may well be representative of this revitalisation.<sup>71</sup>



Figure 3.2: John Duncan, *The Taking of Excalibur*, c.1897 (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))

<sup>67</sup> Geddes and others, *Interpretation*, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> There have also been attempts to develop a Unionist ethno-symbolism through Celtic myths in Ireland both then (Standish O'Grady) and recently through Ian Adamson's work; see Robert Welch, *Changing States: Transformations in Modern Irish Writing* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 223.

<sup>69</sup> 'The Scots Renaissance', p. 138.

<sup>70</sup> Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 90.

<sup>71</sup> Clare A. P. Willsdon, *Mural Painting in Britain 1840-1940: Image and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 276.





Figures 3.3 & 3.4: John Duncan, *James Watt* and *Charles Darwin*, c.1927 (© RCAHMS. Licensors [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))

These two Celtic murals are to some extent complemented by *Lyra Celtica: An Anthology of Representative Celtic Poetry* (1896), edited by Elizabeth Sharp and published by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, as it includes ancient poems regarding pagan figures, including: Fionn, Cuchullin, Maev, Deirdre and Ossian. Elizabeth Sharp chose to include these ancient poems under the one category, 'Ancient Irish and Scottish', which demonstrates the desire in this period to evoke shared national origins with Ireland, which, to some extent, distanced Scotland from England. The company's publication of Macpherson's *Ossian* (edited by Sharp and also published in 1896) similarly played into this context as it recounts the lives of Fionn and Ossian,

who have ties to Irish mythology. Geddes and his wider circle were enthusiastic about disseminating these mythic representatives of national origins for Scotland, aligning Scotland more closely with Ireland which too was using its mythology to distance itself from the metropole.

The Common Room murals also represent several seemingly incongruous panels of scientists: James Watt, Lord Lister and Charles Darwin, which were only completed in 1927 when a donor was found.<sup>72</sup> Unsurprisingly, Smith and Hume are not represented. Each of these individuals is placed alongside a supernatural, and often pagan, figure: Watt, for instance, is pictured in front of Prometheus who 'is seen bringing light from heaven for the service of man' (Figure 3.3).<sup>73</sup> Geddes celebrated electricity, portraying it as a fairy-godmother in his essay 'Cinderella' for its ability to liberate women from hard labour;<sup>74</sup> unlike many who found in paganism an alternative to manufacturing and commercialism, Geddes does not see neo-paganism in opposition to industry. For Geddes, the past and modernity could complement each other and it was no different in this case. Throughout his writings, Geddes heralds Watt as 'a second Prometheus' who 'taught men its applications to a thousand other purposes'.<sup>75</sup> In 'The Valley Section', he claims that Watt was akin to the 'primal' woodsman and is 'the perfect linking of the old industrial order with the new' (p. 66). Again, for Geddes, it is necessary to link past and present in order to subvert notions of 'progress' or civilised industry, and the image of Watt embodies this. Duncan's style also complements this return of the primal as it was influenced by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes who often represented primitive figures in a simplistic, vitalist manner with sharp lines, a restrained colour range and little illusionistic detail; indeed, Joséphin Péladan admired Puvis's rejection of positivism and return to abstraction and, unsurprisingly, Nordau believed Puvis's work embodied degenerate art.<sup>76</sup> This mural

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<sup>72</sup> Letter from Patrick Geddes to John Duncan, 2 February 1926 [National Library of Scotland: MS 10517].

<sup>73</sup> Patrick Geddes and others, *Interpretation of the Pictures in the Common Room of Ramsay Lodge* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1928), p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Cinderella', *The Blue Blanket*, 1 (1912) 327-331.

<sup>75</sup> Geddes and others, *Interpretation*, p. 13; *Cities in Evolution*, p. 60.

<sup>76</sup> Maria E. Di Pasquale, 'Joséphin Péladan: Occultism, Catholicism, and Science in the *Fin de Siècle*', *RACAR* 34.1 (2009), 53-61 (p. 56); Nordau, p. 11.

could also be said to embody John Stuart Blackie's belief in the need to fuse Greek mythology with the 'modern gentleman'.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps this subversion of stadialist narratives is the reason Charles Darwin appears in one of the murals (Figure 3.4), whose education at the University of Edinburgh justifies his appearance in this collection of Scottish symbols. In the mural, Darwin listens to Pan playing pipes (the significance of Pan in Scotland will be dealt with in greater detail below). The fact that both of these figures were symbolic of connection, 'the All' for Geddes,<sup>78</sup> again demonstrates his commitment to resisting division and stadialism. Geddes and Duncan subvert the characterisation of Darwin as a theorist of competitive evolutionism, an idea Geddes took issue with,<sup>79</sup> and instead cast him as a theorist of inheritance and of the inability to separate the past from the present. Like *Arbor Saeculorum*, Geddes and Duncan draw out the interactions between the past and the present and critique those who imagine industrialist economies in opposition to art, mythology and paganism.

A final important example of the links between Hellenic paganism and Scottish cultural nationalism is evident the mural Duncan created for Geddes's flat in Ramsay Garden, *The Evolution of Pipe Music*. Here, as Duncan wrote, the frieze moves from Pan teaching Apollo to 'play upon pan-pipes' through to a Bacchanalian Procession (both reproduced in the first two issues of *The Evergreen*, a magazine described as 'neo-Catholic, purified-Pagan')<sup>80</sup> 'with satyrs playing bagpipe' to the Pied Piper of Hamelin and ending with a sombre note, where a slain Jacobite, Claverhouse, is 'carried from the field with the pipes of the Highland Clans'.<sup>81</sup> With this, the spirit of the pipes 'dies away among the Highland hills'.<sup>82</sup> Through this mural, Jacobite Scotland (symbolic of national resistance) is portrayed as the last force channelling a pagan energy. By including Jacobite references, Geddes and Duncan are both tracing 'the

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<sup>77</sup> Stuart Wallace, *John Stuart Blackie: Scottish Scholar and Patriot* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 193-194.

<sup>78</sup> Phillip Boardman, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator, Peace-warrior* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 99.

<sup>79</sup> *Cities in Evolution*, p. 275.

<sup>80</sup> 'The Evergreen', *Glasgow Herald*, 27 May 1895, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from John Duncan to Sir William Craigie, 25 April 1893 [National Library of Scotland: MS 9987].

<sup>82</sup> Margaret Armour, 'Mural Decoration in Scotland. Part I', *The Studio*, 10 (1897), 100-106 (p. 103).

lines of descent'<sup>83</sup> of the cultural nationalist movement in Scotland and associating Jacobitism with neo-paganism: to revive paganism is to revive the defence of Scottish culture.

These designs indicate a desire to perform a willed return, to create collective past through pagan images, and show that this past can interact with the present – chiming with Geddes's and Sharp's planned lectures on 'The Return of the Gods' for the Edinburgh Summer School.<sup>84</sup> They are intended to build the 'common symbolism' that Yeats was pursuing with his Celtic Mysteries in Ireland for Scotland and are similar to the attempts to 'return to an originary, pre-Colonial Irishness',<sup>85</sup> attempts that were critiqued by G. K. Chesterton.<sup>86</sup> What distinguishes these pieces is their stress on both countering stadialism, which was widely felt to be dividing Scottish nationality and marginalising the Celt, and defence – two key features of Scottish cultural nationalism. These murals are not part of an anti-Union project, which is revealed in some wall decorations at Ramsay Garden that include the heraldry of three Kingdoms that comprise the United Kingdom (Figure 3.5). Despite this, they are not as 'inclusively British' and content with the cultural dynamic in the United Kingdom as John Morrison frames:<sup>87</sup> they are statements of a resistance to British assimilation (that mimic the Outlook Tower's purpose, to 'arrest' centralisation to London) and underline Scottish revivalism and nationhood, images that orient Scotland closer to Ireland thus distancing (although not divorcing) it from England. Indeed, there were times England's heraldry was omitted in the decorations at Ramsay Garden: on several occasions, Scotland's thistle is linked with heraldry associated with France (the fleur-de-lis) and Ireland (the shamrock) and England's rose is neglected (Figure 3.6). In doing so, such work 'severed the union of the flowers' – an idea which created anxieties for some unionists in the period, as discussed in Chapter 1.<sup>88</sup> The murals

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<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Myths*, p. 15.

<sup>84</sup> William Sharp, *Miscellaneous Prose* iv. 99 [National Library of Scotland: MS 8777].

<sup>85</sup> Howe, pp. 52, 70.

<sup>86</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics* (London: John Lane, 1905), pp. 177-178.

<sup>87</sup> John Morrison, 'Nationalism and Nationhood: Late-Nineteenth-Century Painting in Scotland', in *Art, Culture and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, ed. by Michelle Facos and Sharon L. Hirsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 186-206 (p. 201).

<sup>88</sup> 'The Court', *The Scotsman*, 18 July 1889, p. 4.



also reveal that, while England was often associated with a pagan absence, those involved with the Scots Renaissance portrayed paganism as indigenous to (and present in) Scotland which helped further 'other' the nation.

The above attempts to define and represent an *ethnie* were expressed through visual culture, like many others – some of which are discussed in Chapter 5 where a form of visual design connected to murals (pageantry) is focussed on. Murals and pageants were particularly appropriate means for building the collective *ethnie* as they spoke to collective audiences. However, literature could also successfully build myths of origin: in some of William Sharp's writings, this fact, and other distinctive features of neo-paganism in Scotland, is clearly apparent.



Figures 3.5 and 3.6: [left] Lower ground floor wall decoration, 3-10 Ramsay Garden (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)); [right] Detail of Carpet in Geddes's flat, 16 Ramsay Garden (© RCAHMS. Licensor [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk))

### 3.4 Fiona Macleod: Gender, the Early Church and the Green World

William Sharp's neo-paganism perhaps most clearly embodies the less combative neo-paganism and quest for origins fashioned in Scotland. Like Geddes and Duncan's murals, several of Sharp's works subvert stadialism and notions of hierarchy.

However, Sharp's engagement with neo-pagan culture was more pronounced than theirs and in his work we witness how various facets of *fin-de-siècle* neo-paganism could support cultural nationalism in Scotland. Sharp's neo-pagan writings are highly concerned with the relationships and power dynamics between men and women, pagans and Christians, and humans and nature; in some of his works, Sharp challenges these supposed dichotomies. Each of these challenges had ties to Scottish cultural nationalism and helped design an imagined past for Scotland that was defined by synthesis, unity and reclaiming the margins, undermining a divisive stadialism while avoiding militant images. Although many of Sharp's writings express a Celtic defeatism, in *The Pagan Review* and *The Washer of the Ford*, a revivalism can be traced.

Sharp occupies a contested position in understandings of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 2, Sharp had significant ideas about Scottish cultural nationalism, but all critical accounts of Sharp should acknowledge that he was a deeply conflicted man whose writings often contradicted themselves (although not always unintentionally). Critics tend to focus on parts of Sharp's oeuvre and use them to represent the whole, without acknowledging the diversity of his thoughts and writings. Flavia Alaya has described Sharp as having 'an instinctive anti-nationalism' while Steve Blamires believes Sharp's nationalism was 'non-existent'.<sup>89</sup> There is certainly evidence to explain these positions. As was noted in Chapter 2, Sharp (under his most famous pseudonym, Fiona Macleod) claimed: 'a country lives truly only when it realizes that its sole aim is not to live'.<sup>90</sup> He could also distance himself from the Celtic Revival, writing in a letter to Catherine Janvier that art should not aim to be Celtic or politicised but 'beautiful in itself' – using the language of Aestheticism to distance himself from direct engagement with the cultural-political issues surrounding that movement.<sup>91</sup> He even stated (as Macleod)

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<sup>89</sup> Flavia Alaya, *William Sharp – 'Fiona Macleod'* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 15; Steve Blamires, *The Little Book of the Great Enchantment* (Arcata: R J Stewart Books, 2008), p. 36.

<sup>90</sup> William Sharp, 'The Irish Muse – I', *The North American Review*, 179 (1904), 685-697 (p. 693)

<sup>91</sup> (cited in) Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp*, p. 226.

that 'there is, for us all, only one English literature. All else is provincial or dialectic', performing British cultural assimilationism.<sup>92</sup> This attitude is reflected in his scathing attack on Irish nationalists, the unpublished poem 'West Britain: An Appeal',<sup>93</sup> which condemns their attempts to 'degrade the might of England':

Shall this foul shame be yours, shall this foul wrong  
Be done by you, West Britons, kith and kin?  
Shall the red flames of civil war wave long  
Athwart your isle? Think well ere ye begin!  
For yours shall be the bitter anguish strong,  
Even as yours the irrevocable sin! (ll. 23-28)

This poem never acknowledges the 'West Britons' as Irish: it is an assimilationist representation. The 'English' nationality is encoded as noble, strong and masculine (defending female England) while the Irish are violent pillagers, who would 'seize [England's] greatness with rebellious rape' (l. 8). The poem reverses the colonial paradigm as it is Ireland that is portrayed as subordinating England: 'Not in vain / Shall we be played with, like slaves bought and sold!' (ll. 21-22). This quotation is likely a subversion of a much-quoted line from Robert Burns's 'Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation' (1791), which claims that the Scots were 'bought and sold for English gold'.<sup>94</sup> Sharp is trying to reverse the terms of the nationalist debate, co-opting Irish and Scottish complaints to undermine their political rhetoric. Indeed, as will be seen when the Fiona writings are considered below, his work could also be incredibly defeatist over Celtic identity.

However, to represent Sharp solely through this lens is inaccurate. Throughout his career Sharp voiced support for Scottish (and Irish) cultural nationalism. He believed in the 'persistent preservation of the national spirit, of the national idiosyncrasy, the national ideals',<sup>95</sup> highlighted the 'superb efflorescence'<sup>96</sup> of 'national idiosyncrasies' at the *fin de siècle* in his introduction to *Lyra Celtica* and called for

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<sup>92</sup> William Sharp, *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1904), pp. 181-182.

<sup>93</sup> William Sharp, Manuscripts of Poems [National Library of Scotland: MS 8775].

<sup>94</sup> *The Canongate Burns: The Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, ed. by Andrew Hogg and Patrick Scott Hogg (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003), pp. 393-394 (l. 23).

<sup>95</sup> *The Winged Destiny*, p. 164.

<sup>96</sup> William Sharp, 'Introduction', in *Lyra Celtica: An Anthology of Representative Celtic Poetry*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Sharp (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1896), pp. xix-li (p. l).

individual anthologies of Scottish, English, Welsh and Irish poetry.<sup>97</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 2, his yoking of Scottish and Celtic culture with Belgian culture was also concerned with resisting centralisation and accommodation. At times, Sharp was keen to ensure that the voice of Scotland, usually Celtic Scotland, had strength. This part of the chapter will focus on Sharp's cultural nationalist writings, although it is important not to dissociate them from his anti-nationalist words as both can inform each other.

Like Geddes's, Sharp's cultural nationalism attempted to disrupt a 'teleology of civility' that imagined 'civilised' peoples as superior to 'barbarous' ones,<sup>98</sup> as was discussed in Chapter 2. In his writings, he frequently attempts to reclaim barbarity or complicate attempts to easily divide the two, and his neo-paganism often supported this. In *The Washer of the Ford* (1896), written under the Fiona Macleod pseudonym, he utters his desire to reclaim the 'pagan sentiment', 'the old barbaric emotion':<sup>99</sup> 'I long to express anew something of that wonderful historic romance in which we of our race and country are so rich' (p. 5). Like the Decadents, he criticised the so-called 'civilising factor'<sup>100</sup> which he believed destroyed and depopulated Highland communities, exposing the power relations that underpin 'civilisation' discourse, despite the fact that his fiction shied away from portraying the Land Wars, unlike various Irish writers.<sup>101</sup> Such a desire to subvert the notion of, and power dynamic associated with, 'civilisation' by reclaiming barbarity underpinned his neo-paganism and this manifests in his magazine *The Pagan Review*. In a footnote for 'The Oread', Sharp tells us that he (under his pseudonym, Charles Verlayne) is planning a series of 'Barbaric Studies'.<sup>102</sup> Elsewhere in *The Pagan Review*, Sharp also turns the civilisation-barbarity binary on its head, by stating that he finds attempts to civilise through literature (by providing a moral) 'barbaric' (p. 55), just as Wilde and

<sup>97</sup> William Sharp, 'The Irish Muse - I', p. 689.

<sup>98</sup> Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> William Sharp, *The Washer of the Ford: And other Legendary Moralities* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1896), p. 4 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>100</sup> *The Winged Destiny*, p. 273.

<sup>101</sup> For more on Irish Land War writing, see *Fictions of the Irish Land War*, ed. by Heidi Hansson and James H. Murphy (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014).

<sup>102</sup> William Sharp, *The Pagan Review*, 1 (1892), p. 41 [future references to this issue are given in brackets after quotations].

Baudelaire did. *The Pagan Review*, and Sharp's neo-paganism more widely, was a vehicle to interrogate stadialism and recover so-called 'barbarous' or inferior peoples, including the Scots and women, as will be demonstrated.

Sharp's attempt to recover the marginalised had important implications for gender discourse; indeed, Sharp's engagement in gender discourse is one of the defining facets of his neo-paganism, along with an interest in the Early Church and the green world. In Sharp's works we witness how important the politics of gender could be to Scottish cultural nationalism. In his introduction to *The Pagan Review*, Sharp reflects on a power relationship that needs to be addressed: the male-female power dynamic. The 'new paganism', he tells us is 'a potent leaven in the yeast of the "younger generation"' which holds that 'The religion of our forefathers has not only ceased for us personally, but is no longer in any vital and general sense a sovereign power in the realm' (p. 2). Sharp uses neo-paganism to celebrate youth (like Patrick Pearse) and challenge conservatism. He outlines this new ideology:

A new epoch is about to be inaugurated [...] a new epoch in civil law, in international comity, in what, vast and complex though the issues be, may be called Human Economy. The long half-acknowledged, half-denied duel between Man and Woman is to cease, neither through the victory of hereditary overlordship nor the triumph of the far more deft and subtle if less potent weapons of the weaker, but through a frank recognition of copartnery. This new comradeship will be not less romantic, less inspiring, less worthy of the chivalrous extremes of life and death, than the old system of overlord and bondager [...] Far from wishing to disintegrate, degrade, abolish marriage, the 'new paganism' would fain see that sexual union become the flower of human life. But, first, the rubbish must be cleared away; the anomalies must be replaced by just inter-relations; the sacredness of the individual must be recognised; and women no longer have to look upon men as usurpers, men no longer to regard women as spiritual foreigners. (p. 2)

Sharp provides a focused summary of common facets of the neo-pagan movement: celebrating youth, 'the sexual emotion' (p. 3) and re-imagining human inter-relations while rejecting traditions and questioning Christianity. His words come very close to those of Edward Carpenter who argues, in 'Civilization: Its Cause and Cure', that we need to return to 'the naive insouciance of the pagan and primitive world' and reject

notions of 'civilization' that espouse 'forms of dominance' which turn 'the woman into the property of the man'.<sup>103</sup> Significantly, Sharp's discussions on reviving the status of women often invoke the language of inter-nationality. He believes women are 'usurped' and men and women are 'foreign' to each other. Gender and family relations in many senses reflect inter-nationality discourse: superiority and 'overlordship' can be common. Sharp desires to subvert the inequality of paternalistic marriage here by resisting the civilised-savage hierarchy (which, in terms of nations and races, can justify occupation and possession) and replace it with a 'copartnery'. He was not alone in this effort: although it has been argued that Geddes believed in 'differential nature' based on 'female passivity and male energy',<sup>104</sup> he did upset paternalistic ideas by heralding women's 'business capacity'.<sup>105</sup> Sharp wants an interaction between the genders which doesn't involve 'striving to crush, to subdue, to usurp, to retaliate, to separate', which is embodied by his character Orchil – the weaver of the Celtic underworld, who appears in various works.<sup>106</sup> There will be synthesis and mutual dependence; women will no longer be bonded and nations will operate in 'international comity'.

The interactions between gender politics and Scottish identity specifically manifest in such contributions as 'The Pagans' where the narrator, Wilfrid Traquair, a Scotsman, speaks of the 'deep comradeship' with his French lover, Claire (p. 24). Against the wishes of Claire's brother Victor, who rejects her pairing with a 'beggarly' (p. 28) and 'offensive' (p. 26) Scot, these two 'outcast pagans' 'go forth into the green world' (p. 28). Victor's name represents his belief in hierarchy and his desire to marginalise the Scot reflects this: he signifies the 'overlord' figure that Sharp discusses in the Foreword. However, it is noted by Wilfrid that Victor and Claire have Scottish ancestry. By articulating this, Sharp complicates attempts to dissociate and degrade others, and instead reveals connection. Like the sexes, which are styled as

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<sup>103</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure and Other Essays* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1891), pp. 3-5.

<sup>104</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918-1959: Literature, National Identity and Cultural Exchange* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 81.

<sup>105</sup> Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson, *Sex* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1914), p. 238.

<sup>106</sup> Sharp, *Green Fire*, p. 280.

allies against the 'maze of life' (p. 24), hierarchy is rejected on a national level too – the two fights are interconnected. It is fitting that in the back matter of *The Pagan Review*, a book named *Living Scottish Poets* is advertised, amongst other more easily identifiable neo-pagan pieces.

The Fiona identity Sharp went on to develop played an important role in expressing his belief in realigning power dynamics. Macleod was essentially an expression of Sharp's female self and allowed him to engage in what could be termed a transvestism of the authorial subject. Sharp was well aware of just how much power his female side exerted. Indeed, he acknowledged that 'in some things I am more a woman than a man'.<sup>107</sup> In one of his revealing unpublished poems, 'Moi-même',<sup>108</sup> the poetic subject performs a self-examination and reveals an internal gender conflict:

I know not if a man thou art or a woman,  
Or what strange soul hath its abode in thee;  
I think thou art half demon and half human  
And yet sometimes a God I seem to see. (ll. 1-4)

The poem appears to prefigure Maud Gonne's notion that the 'male and female consciousness working in concert' can more strongly experience the supernatural: only through this dual-sexed identity can the poetic subject 'seem to see' a God.<sup>109</sup> Sharp is also believed to have dressed as a woman to write the Macleod texts.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, his secretary Lilian Rea said: 'in him seemed to live again the child of Hermes and Aphrodite',<sup>111</sup> implying Hermaphroditus. He even related a dream, to Yeats's friends, where he was a woman that made love to a male version of Fiona.<sup>112</sup> The Fiona pseudonym was not simply a commercial strategy for Sharp; through it, he could express the intense (even inextricable) bond between men and women. In many ways, the Fiona identity embodied the co-partnership heralded in *The Pagan Review* and

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<sup>107</sup> (cited in) H. Crichton-Miller, 'William Sharp and *The Immortal Hour*', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 5.1 (1925), 35-44 (p. 39).

<sup>108</sup> [NLS: MS 8775].

<sup>109</sup> William F. Halloran, 'W. B. Yeats, William Sharp, Fiona Macleod: a Celtic drama: 1897', *Yeats Annual*, 14 (2001), 159-208 (pp. 178-179).

<sup>110</sup> Ian Fletcher, *W. B. Yeats and his Contemporaries* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), p. 163.

<sup>111</sup> (cited in) Alaya, p. 112.

<sup>112</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Memoirs*, ed. by Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 129.

the acknowledgement that men and women were not so different, creating a queer dynamic that complicated Victorian paternalism. He would even write as a fusion of the two authors, under the hybrid name 'Wilfion'. Sharp can be closely compared to Hirschfeld's understanding of the 'third sex': somewhere between traditional understandings of masculine and feminine.<sup>113</sup> Although other factors certainly influenced the emergence of Fiona, notably his intense feelings for Edith Rinder, who functioned as his muse, as well as his interest in supernaturalism – noted in Chapter 4, it is clear that Fiona was also a product of Sharp's ideas on gender and a reflection of his time and place.

What is striking is that it is this identity that Sharp used to write the vast majority of his Celtic writings. In part, this replayed the feminine encoding of Celtic identity in the nineteenth century that was furthered by Matthew Arnold, as did John Duncan's *Anima Celtica*, discussed in Chapter 4, which was an image that Sharp strangely criticised.<sup>114</sup> This encoding suggested that the Celt was subservient – passive, emotional and imaginative – and needed to be possessed by the rational Saxon.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, a great many of Sharp's writings chime with this understanding of Celtic identity and are even defeatist: he frequently represented the Celt as dead, as having 'reached his horizon' with 'no shore beyond'.<sup>116</sup> In fiction, this is most apparent in *Pharais* (1894), which proleptically eulogises Celtic identity, symbolised by the splitting of a boat aptly named Fionnaghal: the Fiona identity could certainly be connected to Sharp's Celtic defeatism. Nevertheless, Sharp did occasionally create Revivalist work that had many similarities to the Scots Renaissance more widely and his gender manipulation (both through the Fiona identity but also through the Fiona writings) helped him complicate hierarchies and reclaim Celtic and pagan cultures. This is suggested in Fiona's name alone, a name which Sharp popularised following its appearance in Scottish poet James Macpherson's *Ossian*, which he edited. The name

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<sup>113</sup> George Mosse, 'Nationalism and Sexuality in Nineteenth Century Europe', *Society*, 20.5 (1983), 75-84 (p. 83).

<sup>114</sup> For more on his criticism, see Murdo Macdonald, 'Anima Celtica: Embodying the Soul of the Nation in 1890s Edinburgh', in *Art, Nation and Gender: Ethnic landscapes, myths and mother-figures* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 29-37 (p. 35).

<sup>115</sup> Pittock, *Celtic Identity*, pp. 64-66.

<sup>116</sup> William Sharp, *The Sin Eater and other tales* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1895, p. 8.



is a feminine form of Fionn, the Celtic hero who became a key symbol for several Irish nationalists (most obviously Fenianism, the name of which derives from the Fianna, who were led by Fionn). In light of this, the Fiona name is typical of *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalism in many ways: it uses a nationalist vocabulary but its potential for virile militancy is lost by its recasting as feminine, much like Geddes's call for a 'gentler' nationalism, as an alternative to 'militant nationality'.<sup>117</sup> In *The Washer of the Ford*, a Fiona piece, the connection between Sharp's challenging of gender hierarchies and cultural nationalism is apparent, but what we also find is a concern with the Early Church and the green world: two facets of Sharp's neo-paganism that also had ties to Scottish cultural nationalism.

*The Washer of the Ford*, published by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues as part of their Celtic Library, principally includes tales from the period when Saint Columba (or Colum – whose wider significance is treated in Chapter 5) brought Christianity to the Western Isles of Scotland from Ireland in the early sixth century. The collection is an attempt to create a tailored Celtic mythology for Scotland, an imagined past, that seeks to reclaim supposedly barbarous Celtic peoples, complicate the borders between Christianity and paganism and express the nature of the green world.

At the end of the nineteenth century, archaeological analyses had demonstrated the close ties between Christian and pagan customs. Many argued that Christianity had fused itself with paganism after failing to fully displace it; gradualism was the only way it could become rooted. This was felt and represented across Europe: for instance, Wagner teases out the Christian and pagan connections in *Parsifal* (1882). Many of the discoveries were made in Scotland where it was believed that the most authentically pagan societies remained intact. A great number of studies and articles were published on Scotland's existing paganism, with titles including: 'Survivals of Paganism in Foula', 'Still Pagan Scotland', 'A Remnant of Pagan Scotland' and 'Some Survivals of Paganism in Scotland'. J. G. Frazer, who will be discussed in more detail below, also associated Proserpine with the 'Harvest-maiden

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<sup>117</sup> Geddes, 'The Scots Renaissance', p. 138.

[...] in the braes of Balquhiddel', in *The Golden Bough*.<sup>118</sup> These articles tended to suggest that 'Christianity is but a thin veneer upon the solid timber of Paganism' and portrayed Scottish paganism as a counterweight to Enlightenment: <sup>119</sup> Scottish paganism had a 'wondrous power' which 'the moral forces of the culture and enlightenment of centuries were not able completely to overcome'.<sup>120</sup> Sharp, being keen to reclaim the 'pagan sentiment', 'the old barbaric emotion', as he states in the introduction, uses *Washer* to expose the paganism that underpins Christianity, by providing a mythical retelling of the beginnings of Christianity on the West Coast of Scotland, and authenticates the image of Scotland as a particularly pagan nation. The title itself invokes paganism, referring back to Cuchullin/Cuchulain who came across a washer at a ford.<sup>121</sup>

Various stories in the text are concerned with the relationship between paganism and Christianity. On several occasions, the Christian figures represented learn from the pagans and are themselves represented as more 'barbaric'. This is evident in two conjoined stories: 'The Dark Nameless One' and 'The Three Marvels of Hy'. The first story relates Colum's encounter with Angus MacOdrum, or Black Angus, 'one of the race of Odrum the Pagan' (p. 139), a reference to the North Uist legend of Clan MacCodrum of the Seals, 'held to be the children of a Scandinavian king under spells'.<sup>122</sup> Colum talks to the seal who he believes is 'no friend of Christ' and is instead 'of the evil pagan faith' (p. 138). It is locally understood that Angus took a servant of Christ, Kirsteen McVurich, out to sea and there she became the sea-witch of Erraid, the small island near Iona that David Balfour gets marooned on in *Kidnapped*. Consequently, Colum is told that the soul of Angus 'is Judas' (p. 142), confirming paganism's antithesis to Christianity, leading him to crucify Angus. However, in 'The Three Marvels of Hy', Colum is informed by Angus's daughter, the Moon-Child, that

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<sup>118</sup> James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2004), pp. 296-297.

<sup>119</sup> L. Sands, 'Survivals of Paganism in Foula', *Glasgow Herald*, 17 November 1884, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> Robert Munro, 'Some Survivals of Paganism in Scotland', *Good Words*, 30 (1889), 333-337 (p. 335).

<sup>121</sup> T. W. Rolleston, *Celtic: Myths and Legends* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1911), p. 231.

<sup>122</sup> George Henderson, *The Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1912), p. 261.

Angus was 'a man under spells' (p. 167). Colum regrets his action, realising he has left the child alone in the world, and he then asks the Moon-child, of the pagan race: "Teach me the way to God, O little child" (p. 171). The pagan becomes the leader of the Christian: the supposed moral superiority of the Christian is exposed. Significantly, the Moon-Child then transforms gender and becomes Christ: 'there were no seaweeds in her hair and no shell in the little wee hands of her. For now, it was a male Child that was there, shining with a light from within: and in his fair sunny hair was a shadowy crown of thorns, and in his hand was a pearl of great price' (p. 171). Sharp subtly transforms the pagan sea imagery into Christian images: the seaweeds become a crown of thorns and the shell becomes the pearl of great price. The way to Christianity is through paganism, not against it. The story disrupts various forms of hierarchy and synthesis prevails: Christian and pagan are levelled, male and female become interchangeable and his focus on the West of Scotland revives the Celtic voice over Anglo-centrism. Sharp hoped that 'the little northern isle [Iona], will be as it were the tongue in the mouth of the South':<sup>123</sup> he can use his writings to vocalise the fringe, not unlike Geddes's imagining of Iona as the new cultural centre of the British Isles, when he stated: 'it is not for London to educate Iona; it is for Iona to educate London'.<sup>124</sup>

This story reflects Sharp's wider interest in the interaction between paganism and the Early Church. Besides the fact that Sharp styled the Fiona identity as Catholic, in a letter to John Goodchild he articulated his faith that a new redeeming figure would come on Iona, who will be 'a woman who will express the old Celtic Bride or Brigit [...] The Virgin Mother of Catholicism'.<sup>125</sup> In *Washer*, he also portrayed Bride as the 'Foster-Mother of Christ' (p. 48) who can journey from the Western Isles to Bethlehem through a portal of arched tress, and his re-imagining of 'The Last Supper', which particularises the tale for Scotland by setting it in a Glen and using the Gaelic

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<sup>123</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, p. 159.

<sup>124</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Keltic Art', 26 July 1899, p. 8 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/7].

<sup>125</sup> (cited in) Blamires, pp. 204-205.

language, appears in *Washer* too.<sup>126</sup> According to Sharp, nothing less than 'a strange complexity of paganism and Christianity' (p. 6) characterised the Celtic mind, and this view is reflected in the collection's stories. Like Hornel and Henry's sister paintings, *The Druids: Bringing in the Mistletoe* and *The Star in the East*, which 'equalize Pagan and Christian values', an Early Christian-Pagan hierarchy is questioned.<sup>127</sup> While certain Protestants in the nineteenth century associated Catholicism with paganism to make it appear more barbarous, most notably evident in Free Kirk theologian Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons* (1853) and Kingsley's *Hypatia*, Sharp associates them to reclaim the supposedly barbarous and counter the Calvinism he described as 'a curse to our despoiled land'.<sup>128</sup> Sharp bolstered the West of Scotland's image as a Catholic, spiritual centre and, in doing this, presents Catholicism and paganism as mutually dependent means of returning to the past and critiquing the Reformation. Sharp's use of Early Church symbols also oriented Scotland closer to Ireland, not only through Iona (which is closely associated with Ireland because of St Columba) but also through Bride (who originated from Ireland). Scotland's mythic past did not have to be exclusively pagan: Ireland's, as Smith outlines, included a mixture of pagan and Christian figures and it is very similar in Sharp's writing.<sup>129</sup>

In this respect, Sharp's work reflects the fact that the Scots Renaissance's interest in pre-Christian culture and society was not completely antagonistic to Christianity – it could even involve enthusiasm for the Early Church. This detail has important implications for narratives of twentieth-century Scottish literature as it is too often understood that this interest in pre-Reformation religious forms emerged with the 1920s Scottish Renaissance, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, but the concern can clearly be traced back to the 1890s. Despite Geddes to some degree celebrating the potential of the Free Church of Scotland that he was brought up in to

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<sup>126</sup> Phoebe Traquair also situates biblical tales against particular Scottish landscapes (the Eildon Hills and the Leaderfoot Viaduct) in her mural decorations for the Apostolic Church in Edinburgh (1893-1901).

<sup>127</sup> Elizabeth Cumming, 'Celtic Influenced Art', in *Celtic Culture: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. by John Thomas Koch (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp. 110-112 (p. 110).

<sup>128</sup> William Sharp, *The Sin Eater and other tales* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1895), p. 13

<sup>129</sup> Smith, *Myths*, p. 137.

support the Celtic Revival – describing it as ‘our Celtic religious movement’ –<sup>130</sup> he notes the ‘moral narrowness of Calvinism’, when writing with Branford.<sup>131</sup> Geddes even described the Free Church’s principle of endurance as diffusing ‘sordid ugliness’ and ‘bacterial dirt’ that were the ‘shame of puritan Edinburgh’.<sup>132</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 4, *The Evergreen* reveals nostalgia for Jacobitism and Catholicism that indirectly critiqued the Reformation, as reflected in John Duncan’s playful Celtic corpus (Figure 3.7). The writers and thinkers in this period discovered ‘a spring in the period of Catholic chivalry’ that was consistent with a wider Decadent culture that often felt a nostalgia for the less ‘civilised’ Catholic faith and celebrated such figures as the Madonna, Mary, Queen of Scots and Joan of Arc.<sup>133</sup> Sharp, and others, use paganism and the Early Church together, to at times subtly and at times outspokenly critique the Reformation which was felt to marginalise Celtic culture and a truer Scottish self.



Figure 3.7: John Duncan, tailpiece for *The Evergreen*, 1896

A final feature of Sharp’s neo-paganism that had ties to Scottish cultural nationalism and nurtured an image of a synthetic (over militant) mythic past was the green world. Sharp was concerned with neo-pagan nature worship and its potential to

<sup>130</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes for a lecture to the Celtic Society, 1897 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/9].

<sup>131</sup> Victor Branford and Patrick Geddes, *Our Social Inheritance* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1919), p. 16.

<sup>132</sup> Patrick Geddes, ‘A Northern College: An Experimental Study in Higher Education’, p. 4 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/61].

<sup>133</sup> ‘The Evergreen’, *Glasgow Herald*, p. 11.

unify peoples and genders. Perhaps the most striking image of synthesis through pagan nature worship, and its relationship to Scotland, is evident in 'The Annir Choille', where the green world is detailed and Keithoir – a relative of Pan – appears. Here, the protagonist (Cathal) renounces women and paganism in favour of Christianity. However, when he encounters the female Ardanna, he rejects Christianity and returns to paganism. He gives up his Christian name (Gille-Mhoire – servant of Mary) and returns to being Cathal mac Art 'of the race of Alpein' (p. 183), a name which alludes to the man who is often considered the first king of Scotland, Alpin, thus tying Cathal's pagan affirmation to his rediscovering of Scottish identity. This reading is substantiated by the fact that, when Cathal is caught, he is left in the hollow of an oak tree, most likely a reference to Charles II who hid in an oak tree to evade the Roundheads at the Battle of Worcester, which led to the oak tree becoming a key Jacobite symbol. The name Cathal can also be anglicised as Charles, supporting this interpretation. As Jacobite imagery was often associated with Scotland in the 1890s, the imagery appears to point to a Scottish symbolism. Furthermore, when Cathal looks out from the oak tree, he can see in the stars the sword of Fionn and the harp of Brigidh, significant figures in Scottish neo-paganism in the period. By rediscovering paganism, Cathal rediscovers Scotland and, in turn, he discovers synthesis.

Through the oak tree, Cathal experiences the 'green life' where spirits can live in, and pass through and between, trees. This idea may well have developed from J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, discussed below, which describes at length the 'savage' belief that 'the world in general is animate, and trees are no exception to the rule' and similar ideas would later be replayed in Forster's 'Other Kingdom', where trees house individuals and are invested with pagan energies.<sup>134</sup> In 'The Annir-Choille', these spirits all draw energy from one another: 'they are as I am' (p. 212), says Deòin, the 'Druid of the trees' (p. 213). This green life was even practised by Sharp himself: Lady Gregory, for one, related a time when Sharp embraced a tree and felt his soul

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<sup>134</sup> Frazer, p. 51.

flowing through the sap.<sup>135</sup> Nature, for Sharp and in his writing, was a means of creating a larger family that was built on synergy over hierarchy and division, rooted in paganism. In these respects, Sharp's writings have close connections with the German youth movement that formed 'a pantheism that integrated man, nature and the nation, directing attention away from the physical and toward national mythology'.<sup>136</sup> It is also easy to see the eco-political vein in Decadent paganism that Dennis Denisoff outlines here.<sup>137</sup> Such writings on the green life would also go on to influence a more vocal Scottish nationalist, Neil M. Gunn; Sharp's influence is particularly apparent in *The Silver Darlings* (1941) and *The Green Isle of the Great Deep* (1944).

Sharp's interest in synthesis and the green life may well have developed from his awareness of Pater (as well as Whitman), who also interrogated the divide between paganism and Christianity, as Sharp traces in his review of *Marius the Epicurean*.<sup>138</sup> Pater's observations that 'when people are collected together', 'some new and rapturous spirit, not traceable in the individual units of a multitude'<sup>139</sup> is formed resonate with Sharp's writings. Pater's ideas develop Hegel's notion of the *geist* that exists above individual man and Carlyle's writings on meta-consciousness, such as when he laments the loss of the Roman Republic's society – its 'Infinite' – where man could 'combine with his fellows as the living member of a greater whole' in 'Characteristics' (1831).<sup>140</sup> The unity of the pre-Christian world was longed for in an age of industrialism. Pater also believed this unity could extend to nature, writing of 'the feeling we too have of a life in the green world' in *Greek Studies*.<sup>141</sup>

The figure of Pan is bound up with this expression of synthetic green life in 'The Annir Choille', which is evident when Deòin tells Cathal that Keithoir is their god. Sharp mentions Keithoir in the dedication of *Pharais* to Edith Wingate Rinder: 'In the

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<sup>135</sup> Halloran, 'W. B. Yeats', p. 185.

<sup>136</sup> Mosse, p. 83.

<sup>137</sup> Dennis Denisoff, 'Dissipating Nature of Decadent Paganism from Pater to Yeats', *Modernism/Modernity*, 15.3 (2008), 431-446 (p. 433).

<sup>138</sup> William Sharp, 'Marius the Epicurean', *Time*, 12 (1885), 341-354.

<sup>139</sup> (cited in) Denisoff, p. 440.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 3 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1887), II, pp. 193-227 (pp. 202-205).

<sup>141</sup> (cited in) Denisoff, p. 439.

mythology of the Gael are three forgotten deities, children of the Delbaith-Dana. These are Seithoir, Teithoir and Keithoir [...] Keithoir is the god of the earth; dark-eyed, shadowy brother of Pan; and his fane is among the lonely glens and mountains and lonelier isles of "Alba cona lingantaibh." It is because you and I are of the children of Keithoir that I wished to grace my book with your name'.<sup>142</sup> Sharp is building a specific Scottish mythology here that draws from Celtic, as well as Hellenic, paganism, which he found complementary,<sup>143</sup> a view shared by T. W. Rolleston.<sup>144</sup> For Sharp, Keithoir is a version of Pan who is associated with Scotland and the Celtic identity – a figure who can fuse man with nature, much like Orchil.

Pan, who was a key figure for the Decadents and had even inspired the German Decadent magazine *Pan* (1895-1900), became a significant personification of the synthetic form of cultural nationalism that was being pursued in Scotland in the 1890s. Robert Crawford noted in passing the enthusiasm for Pan in this period – citing Kenneth Grahame's interest in Pan and the use of Pan on the cover of Buchan's *Scholar Gypsies* (1896) – but the enthusiasm deserves more attention.<sup>145</sup> As has been commented on, Pan appears in the Ramsay Garden mural scheme. Geddes not only associated Pan with Scotland in those mural designs but also in his claim that Pan's spirit had been best 'preserved here in the north'.<sup>146</sup> Pan embodied the 'unified whole' for Geddes as he did for Sharp,<sup>147</sup> which would have appealed to Geddes's synergism and resistance to stadialism. In *Pan's Pipes* (1878), Robert Louis Stevenson acknowledged that Pan provided an alternative to teleological progress, symbolising 'common' nature and impulses.<sup>148</sup> For Stevenson, 'Pan [was] not dead'<sup>149</sup> but was an essential image to counter the stadialism that he, like Geddes, was so keen to question throughout his novels and essays. Likewise, in 'The Birth and

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<sup>142</sup> William Sharp, *Pharais: A Romance of the Isles* (New York: Duffield & Company, 1907), p. viii.

<sup>143</sup> William Sharp, Manuscripts and typescripts of dramas [National Library of Scotland: MS 8776].

<sup>144</sup> Rolleston, p. 22; for Rolleston, Celtic culture is imagined in opposition to 'barbarous' culture, unlike in Sharp's writings.

<sup>145</sup> Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp. 526-527.

<sup>146</sup> Patrick Geddes, *Dramatisations of History* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1923), p. 52.

<sup>147</sup> Geddes and others, *Interpretation*, p. 15.

<sup>148</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Pan's Pipes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.



Growth of Art' masque performed at the Glasgow School of Art in 1909, the narrator, Pan, critiques 'huddled civilization'<sup>150</sup> while in Barrie's *Peter Pan* the protagonist (whose name links Christianity and paganism) lives in a realm which halts temporal progress. Glasgow Boy George Henry even addressed E. A. Hornel as 'Pan' in a letter,<sup>151</sup> but there is no clear explanation for why he did so. These few examples of Pan's various appearances in Scottish culture in the period are revealing. They show that Pan was a symbol that could counter the divisiveness of 'progress' felt in Scotland. If Pan represented a threatening virility for some writers, including Machen and Crowley, in Scotland he was almost exclusively representative of synthesis, as he was for D. H. Lawrence in 'Pan in America' (1936). Pan could not only be used to symbolise an alternative to stadialism but to signify connection that was rooted in the land. In this context, it is clear why Sharp draws upon the image of Pan (and his Scottish 'brother' Keithoir): to associate images of interconnection with Scotland's mythic past.

Although Sharp's works stood in opposition to Scottish cultural nationalism in many ways, aspects of his neo-paganism could certainly support it. Sharp's concern with gender discourse, the Early Church and the green world, which defined his neo-paganism, could all play into overcoming stadialism and support attempts to strengthen Scottish and Celtic identities in several ways. As one reviewer in the back matter of *The Washer of the Ford* commented, Sharp's neo-pagan writings have a 'barbaric element' that 'breaks up even the thick crust of an elaborated civilization' and instead searches for 'stirrings of a conscious kinship' (p. 9). Indeed, his work is not unlike George MacDonald's *Lilith* (1895), which 'derides the socioeconomic pretensions of the British Empire that subordinate spiritual consciousness to material gains'.<sup>152</sup> Sharp's neo-paganism can offer a representation of Scotland's mythical past

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<sup>150</sup> Fra Newbery, *The Birth and Growth of Art: A Symbolistic Masque in Five Ages and an Allegory*, Pamphlet (1909), p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from George Henry to E. A. Hornel, 3 December 1895 [Broughton House: 2668].

<sup>152</sup> Jason Marc Harris, *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 93.

that is concerned with recovering the status of marginal peoples over militarism; it was in tune with the wider culture of Scottish cultural nationalism in the period.

### **3.5 Davidson and Frazer: Resisting Neo-Paganism and the Scots Renaissance**

These attempts to use paganism to style a particular imagined past for Scotland were often resisted. In the 1890s, there were several critiques of paganism and neo-paganism which often either directly or indirectly discredited the Scottish cultural nationalist movement. These have to be understood as the direct critiques prove the existence of cultural nationalism while both the direct and indirect critiques help us understand paganism's important role in *fin-de-siècle* cultural nationalism.

J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion* (originally published in 1890, but expanded for several editions over the following twenty-five years) is a critique of paganism that indirectly opposes some of the ideas that underpinned the Scottish cultural nationalist movement. In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer often portrays primitivism as a stage in stadial development, one that had not been fully purged. Although Frazer undercuts the idea of clear stages of progress, by demonstrating that 'past' paganism shadows and underpins the present in various ways that we are seldom aware of, he argues that the human race needs to move beyond it: we may be 'indebted' to our predecessors but 'the curtain must soon descend on savagery forever'.<sup>153</sup> Frazer critiqued the idea that civilised society had fully moved beyond paganism, but he nonetheless performed the role of a stadialist in charting and proclaiming its inevitable, indeed universal, demise.

Frazer's work had implications for Scottish cultural nationalism. Although Frazer does not solely address Scotland, *The Golden Bough* does style many parts of Scotland – particularly the Highlands and Islands – as still exhibiting the traits of the pagan past, as especially backward. Frazer writes of 'Shetland seamen [who] still buy winds from old women who claim to rule the storms'; of 'Orkney Islanders [who] will

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<sup>153</sup> Frazer, pp. 182, 694.

wash a sick person and then throw the water down at a gateway, in the belief that the sickness will leave the patient and be transferred to the first person who passes through the gate'; and of processions 'which survived in the Highlands of Scotland and in St Kilda down to the latter half of last century'.<sup>154</sup> These are not direct attacks on Scottish cultural nationalism but they did not sit well with it. While several Scottish cultural nationalists clung to a pagan past and looked to the Highlands and Islands to recover and revive the less incorporated, Celtic identity for the nation, Frazer portrayed this culture as backward and doomed to expire.

Unsurprisingly, several Scottish cultural nationalists appear to have subverted Frazer's work, often by drawing from his representations of 'savage' people and asserting their value and recovering their importance. As has been outlined, Sharp may well have used Frazer's research on supposedly backward, pagan traits for *The Washer of the Ford* as part of a recovery project; this understanding is corroborated by the fact that the figure of the sin-eater (which inspired his collection of that name) also appears in *The Golden Bough*.<sup>155</sup> The Fiona identity itself may even be indebted to Frazer as Sharp tells us she was born to him 'on the banks of Lake Nemi',<sup>156</sup> the location of the golden bough in Frazer's study of pagan magic.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, Hornel and Henry's *Druids* bears a striking resemblance to Frazer's descriptions of druidical processions and shows how keen Scottish cultural nationalists were to represent and exhibit activities that Frazer believed appeared in supposedly past stages:<sup>158</sup> they did not malign them but recovered them for the Celtic Revival's language of resistance. Similarly, Mackintosh's 'The Wassail' (Figure 3.8), depicting a pagan fertility festival, evokes the importance of vitalism and rebirth, which carried the ethos of his cultural nationalism, discussed in Chapter 2. The customs that Frazer wrote about were appropriated by neo-pagans and others in much the same way as his work was later

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<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 482, 476.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 483-485.

<sup>156</sup> (cited in) Ernest Rhys, 'Everyman Remembers' (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1931), pp. 79-80.

<sup>157</sup> The significance of the Lake Nemi location for Sharp is discussed in Blamires, pp. 71-75.

<sup>158</sup> Frazer, pp. 597-598; Frazer's references to sin-eating and tree spirits may well have inspired Sharp too.

appropriated by the Modernists: while Frazer believed in moving away from the past, many used his findings as a means to return to it and (re)mythologise the present.<sup>159</sup>

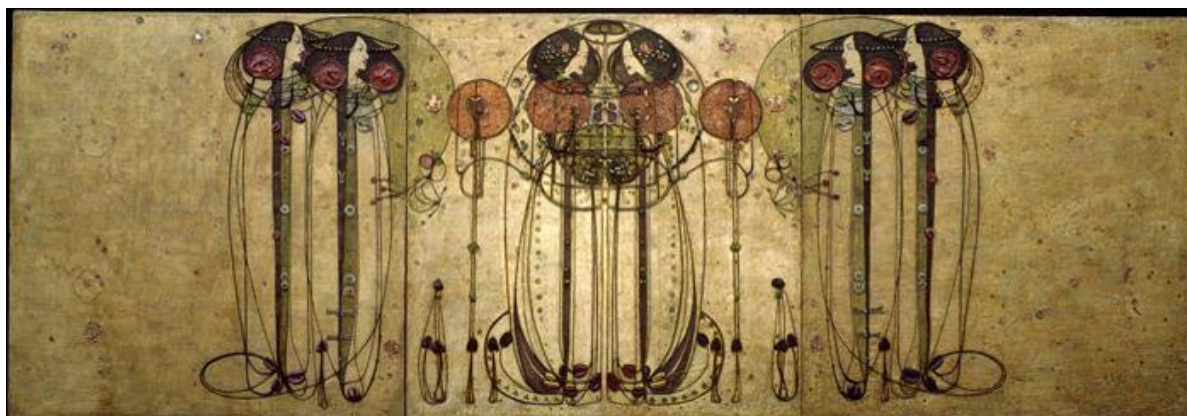


Figure 3.8: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *The Wassail*, gesso panel, 1900 (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection)

There were also direct critiques of neo-paganism and the rising Scottish cultural and political nationalist movements. Much of John Davidson's work represents a sustained effort to both ridicule and marginalise Scottish identity and collective ideologies. Davidson, who was anthologised in Elizabeth Sharp's *Lyra Celtica* (1896) which was published by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, was opposed to the rising neo-paganism and, indeed, all attempts to find common cause in religion. Davidson could draw from Classical paganism (at times akin to J. G. Frazer) in order to attack both it and Christianity, resisting what he believed were their impediments to his scientific and materialist conceptions of existence. The best example of this is in *The Testament of John Davidson* where the poet destroys various figures associated with Mediterranean and Germanic paganisms, including Thor, Aidoneus and Apollo. As Douglas Bush notes, the poet banishes 'the fear of hell, the worship of God and chastity, and all the other bogies which have hindered man from realizing his unfettered supremacy'.<sup>160</sup> Davidson also associates these Gods with particular races:

<sup>159</sup> For some examples of Modernist uses of myth, see Shanyin Fiske, 'From Ritual to the Archaic in Modernism: Frazer, Harrison, Freud, and the Persistence of Myth', in *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*, ed. by Jean-Michel Rabaté (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 173-192.

<sup>160</sup> Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1937), p. 467.

it is only when ethnicities are eradicated that the Gods die.<sup>161</sup> Throughout his works, Davidson continually rejects collective identities of all forms; in 'A Ballad in Blank Verse' his autobiographical subject states: 'No creed for me! I am a man apart: / A mouthpiece for the creeds of all the world' (ll. 426-427).<sup>162</sup> It is the pure materiality of humanity that binds it to the eternal for Davidson;<sup>163</sup> it is community that causes angst.

Consequently, much of Davidson's writing rejects the rising Scottish cultural nationalism in the period and instead searches for a larger (imperialist) whole. Unlike most *fin-de-siècle* Scottish artists, and even critics of the Scottish movement like Neil Munro, Davidson saw the increasing centralisation within the British state as an opportunity to assimilate Scotland. As 104,647 Scots signed a petition to Queen Victoria in 1898, objecting to the use of the word 'England' to refer to 'Britain',<sup>164</sup> Davidson went to great efforts throughout his writings to denigrate Scottish nationality and perform cultural assimilation. Davidson sought to interrogate Scottish identity and celebrate a British, even English identity, one that made no concessions to the Celt or British pluralism. In his play *Bruce* (1886), Davidson exposes and mocks Scottish culture and history, seeking 'to cut himself off from his national heritage'.<sup>165</sup> The play charts the events leading up to Bannockburn, where Edward II seeks an England which 'shall stretch from Orkney to Land's End'.<sup>166</sup> With sharp wit, Davidson mocks the national argument by portraying Bruce, the insignia of Scottish nationality, not only as one who suffers from insanity (p. 138) but as one who almost supports Edward II's claim in the fourth act, when discussing Britain with his soldiers:

2<sup>nd</sup> Soldier: But might it not have been a benefit  
If Rome had conquered Scotland too, and made  
Between the Orkneys and the Channel Isles  
One nation?

<sup>161</sup> John Davidson, *The Testament of John Davidson* (London: Grant Richards, 1908), p. 107.

<sup>162</sup> John Davidson, *Selected Poems* (London: John Lane, 1905), pp. 70-87 (p. 86).

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>164</sup> Graeme Morton, 'Scotland is Britain: The Union and Unionist-Nationalism, 1807-1907', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 1 (2008), 127-141 (p. 128).

<sup>165</sup> J. Benjamin Townsend, *John Davidson: Poet of Armageddon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 67.

<sup>166</sup> John Davidson, *Plays* (London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1894), p. 208 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

Bruce: A subtle question, soldier;  
But profitless, requiring fate unwound.  
It might be well were all the world at peace,  
One commonwealth, or governed by one king;  
It might be paradise; but on the earth  
You will not find a race so provident  
As to be slaves to benefit their heirs. (p. 183)

Bruce here contemplates the benefit of the British Isles being one assimilated nation and Davidson's use of meter, having Bruce finish the pentameter of the second soldier's final line, emphasises the interchange's concern with integration. The few rousing nationalist speeches made in the play are punctured with such considerations of assimilationism. Scotland's other national hero, Wallace, is portrayed as a pro-assimilationist: 'Who doubts our lands are destined to be one? / Who does not pray for that accomplishment' (pp. 168-169). The national struggle of Bannockburn itself is also infantilised, described as 'child's play' (p. 212). The play mocks Scotland's claim to nationhood and portrays its claims as trifling. Such an attitude is also exhibited by characters in his novels, such as the Scotsman John Inglis (whose surname again points at the Englishness of the Scot) in *Baptist Lake* (1894). John rejects his Glasgow roots in preference for London: 'Scotch am I, and with Scotch ways in my blood, and yet I am not ashamed of having forsaken the Broomielaw' and mentions the 'gloomy Glasgow Sunday clogging my blood'.<sup>167</sup> Various attempts are made throughout Davidson's writings to undermine Scottish culture and identity and perform assimilationism.

His most outspoken expression of favour for Scottish, Irish and Welsh assimilation is evident in *The Testament of John Davidson* (1908). Here, he proposes granting Home Rule to Scotland but a split Home Rule, one that would grant autonomy to 'the Highlands of Scotland, and to the Lowlands'.<sup>168</sup> This proposition is cheekily designed to undercut nationalism, by rebooting the division between the Highlands and Lowlands which had inhibited Scottish nationalism in the nineteenth century, as discussed in Chapter 1. He proposes the same for Ireland, while England

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<sup>167</sup> John Davidson, *Baptist Lake* (London: Ward and Downey, 1894), p. 134.

<sup>168</sup> Davidson, *The Testament*, p. 14.

and Wales should remain whole: those who seek Home Rule need to be divided is Davidson's clear message. This vision of divided Home Rule is later complemented by his belief in assimilation when discussing the Irish question:

England requires you to be English, as the Welsh are English, as the Scots are English. The Welsh and the Scots, having accepted England and the meaning of England, remain magnanimous. The Irish, having refused England and the great meaning of England, are less fortunate [...] We recommend you heartily to cease thinking of demands on England, and of what England should do for Ireland. Set yourselves, rather, to study and understand what England requires of you, and what you should do for England.<sup>169</sup>

What Davidson exhibits here is not anti-nationalism but a forceful, imperialist English nationalism, one that seeks to discredit and absorb the Celtic fringe, as well as all other cultures. In the context of his materialism and belief in eugenics, the English are the dominant race who must be supported, not questioned or undermined by other forms of nationalism.

This English imperialist nationalism is primarily evident in his poem 'St George's Day' (1895), published by John Lane, where various people attempt to persuade a sceptic, Menzies, round to the continued greatness of England. Davidson even portrays the Scots as reconciled to England's superiority: Sandy, who speaks Scots, claims that Wallace and Bruce, who Davidson took time to malign in *Bruce*, were Englishmen:

Sandy: The Bruce and Wallace wight I ken,  
Who saved old Scotland from its friends,  
Were mighty northern Englishmen.<sup>170</sup>

They succeed in persuading Menzies to their beliefs and the poem finishes on a chorus of English nationalism and assimilationism:

All: By bogland, highland, down, and fen,  
All Englishmen, all Englishmen!<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>170</sup> Davidson, *Selected Poems*, pp. 148-160 (p. 155).

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

Despite Davidson's own pursuit of materialist individualism,<sup>172</sup> there is a remarkable claim for an imperialist whole in these works. These attempts to assimilate Scotland and various other territories into England are often closely bound up with Enlightenment discourse. While those interested in nationalism tended to resist, or at least complicate, the Enlightenment in *fin-de-siècle* Scotland, it is unsurprising that those who pursued assimilation sought to support the foundations of the Enlightenment and its stress on universal progress and marginalising less commercialised culture. This particularly manifests in *Bruce* where Wallace is described as having 'gothic hands' (p. 164) that undid Edward's 'order' (p. 164); the Scots and their nationalism are portrayed as backward, as impediments to the development of Enlightenment materialism. While some cultural and political nationalists were trying to rekindle a feeling for the national heroes and their manhood – particularly Charles Waddie, the founder of the Scottish Home Rule Association, and William Hole, discussed in Chapter 5 – Davidson tries to incorporate such heroes or present them as regressive. We are also conscious of Davidson's styling of the Scot as anti-Enlightenment when one of Bruce's allies states:

Lamberton: This thing is sure: reason must be constrained:  
 You must be hot, believing, fanatic;  
 You must be wrathful, patriotic, rash;  
 Forethought abandon o'er to providence' (p. 146)

Both Scotland's image and the notion of nationalisms which return to the past stand in the way of Davidson's nihilistic materialism and he takes great pains to ridicule them, while associating English progress with enlightened development. The backwardness of Scottish nationalism and paganism are rebuked.

Davidson's views were at odds with the likes of Geddes's. While Davidson's writings attempt to stress independence 'not just from society and parents but at the

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<sup>172</sup> For a detailed discussion on Davidson's individualism, see Regenia Gagnier, *Individualism, Decadence and Globalization: On the Relationship of Part to Whole, 1859-1920* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 97-110.



level of the sperm',<sup>173</sup> Geddes rejected this, believing in cooperation amongst artists but also amongst cells, articulated in *The Evolution of Sex*.<sup>174</sup> As Gagnier demonstrates, Davidson's resistance to collective identities is evident in 'Thirty Bob a Week' (1894):

And it's this way that I make it out to be:  
No fathers, mothers, countries, climates – none;  
Not Adam was responsible for me,  
Nor society, nor systems, nary one:  
A little sleeping seed, I woke – I did, indeed –  
A million years before the blooming sun (ll. 67-72)<sup>175</sup>

Both nation and binding ideologies are rejected here in favour of a Nietzschean nihilistic materialism that reflects the enthusiasm for social Darwinism in the period.<sup>176</sup> All is reduced to a rationalist 'survival of the fittest' narrative that prizes competition above connection, again antithetical to Geddes's ideas. It is unsurprising that the nation and paganism were two of Davidson's foes and that he satirised Decadence (particularly Wilde) in *Earl Lavender* (1895) and *Baptist Lake*.<sup>177</sup> Concepts that often critiqued a divisive progressivism were unlikely to be well-received here.

However, we must be careful not to overstate Davidson's dismissal of Scotland. It has recently been argued by Hazel Hynd in 'John Davidson and the Hidden Legacy of Burns' that his writing can be situated within the traditions of Scottish literature, not against them.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, MacDiarmid was enthusiastic about Davidson's writings, although there could be an element of satire to his excessive references to Davidson's Scottish nationality,<sup>179</sup> and two of Davidson's poems were included in Elizabeth Sharp's *Lyra Celtica*; however, this is not entirely surprising given the collection's broad understanding of Celtic ethnicity. Although Davidson may have had

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<sup>173</sup> Gagnier, p. 103.

<sup>174</sup> Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex* (New York: The Humboldt Publishing Co., 1890), p. 284.

<sup>175</sup> Davidson, *Selected Poems*, pp. 106-110 (p. 109).

<sup>176</sup> For more on the ties between Davidson and Nietzsche, see Ritchie Robertson, 'Nietzsche in Glasgow: Alexander Tille, John Davidson and Edwin Muir', in *Scotland and the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century World*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and others (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 213-230.

<sup>177</sup> Angela Kingston, *Oscar Wilde as a Character in Victorian Fiction* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 130-135.

<sup>178</sup> Hazel Hynd, 'John Davidson and the Hidden Legacy of Burns', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 33.1 (2004), 87-96.

<sup>179</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *Selected Essays of Hugh MacDiarmid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 197-204.

an interest in certain aspects of Scottish history and culture, his expressions of cultural assimilationism and stadialism are clearly strong and they very distinctly stood in opposition to the developments of cultural nationalism in Scotland in the period.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Neo-paganism was a tool Scottish cultural nationalists drew on to develop their counter-cultural identity. The use of neo-paganism for this end was common in *fin-de-siècle* culture<sup>180</sup> but in Scotland we see how it was tailored to support cultural nationalism. Several *fin-de-siècle* Scottish cultural nationalists rejected stadialism which was felt to be inhibiting their nationality and did so through a recovery and performance of pagan culture and myths. Such retrogressions helped replace Enlightenment notions of national development and distanced the nation from the metropole and assimilation. They also created space to develop a myth of common origin that could bind a divided nationality. The form this mythical past took was rarely underpinned by militarist images but instead by symbols of unity and synthesis: it was not a cultural nationalism designed to overcome Britain but to reclaim Scotland's national autonomy within the British Empire. This aspect of Scottish neo-paganism did not function independently: demonstrating existing ties to these myths of origin and previous, stronger periods of nationality could help bolster pride for such periods and these ties could be activated through a return to the occult sphere.

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<sup>180</sup> Hallett, p. 201.

## **4 'Where Sorcerers Swarm': Practical Supernaturalism and the Continuation of Descent**

## 4.1 Introduction

The desire to develop and define a Scottish *ethnie* did not simply rely on neo-paganism for its full articulation. Besides creating national myths and origins that could be identified with to unify the nation through an imagined common past, Scottish cultural nationalists also highlighted present day connections to such origins or earlier periods of national consciousness, lines of descent, and represented the potential of these past or supposedly dead periods to return and occupy the present. In order to communicate these ideas, other tropes of *fin-de-siècle* Decadence were often drawn from, namely forms of practical supernaturalism – esoteric occultism and exoteric spiritualism.

In some senses, the *fin-de-siècle* interest in the occult stood at odds to the Scottish cultural nationalist project which challenged ideas of progress. Patrick Brantlinger has argued that the late-Victorian enthusiasm for the occult was at times tied to the late-imperial desire to explore and dominate new territories and was thus complicit in 'civilising' missions. Furthermore, many practitioners of occultism and spiritualism framed their activities as a fusion of religion and science, not as antithetical to progress.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Brantlinger qualifies that practical supernaturalism could also resist progressivist narratives as it could be associated with the past and types of mentalities that were 'primitive or infantile'.<sup>2</sup> Nordau was keen to portray practical supernaturalism as degenerate by characterising the mystics and those who had an interest in the Philosopher's Stone, Kabbalah and the Rosy Cross (like several associated with the Scots Renaissance, which is demonstrated below) as opposed to rational logic and science.<sup>3</sup> Spiritualism, mysticism, occultism and theosophy were reviving or developing throughout Europe in the period for numerous reasons, and in many cases these interests indicated a 'desire for unorthodox

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<sup>1</sup> For Péladan's interest in fusing science and religion, see Maria E. Di Pasquale, 'Josphin Péladan: Occultism, Catholicism, and Science in the *Fin de Siècle*', *RACAR* 34.1 (2009), 53-61 (p. 53).

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 238-240.

<sup>3</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1895), pp. 14, 21-22, 220.

numinous experience in a post-Darwinian age'.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, practical supernaturalism could have a role to play in Scottish cultural nationalist politics that involved rejecting, or complicating, narratives of civilisation and improvement.

Specifically, practical supernaturalism was an apparatus that could help authenticate narratives of national continuation and descent, a concept which was often vital to cultural nationalisms. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (published in French in 1961), Frantz Fanon theorised that 'the occult sphere is a sphere belonging to the community which is entirely under magical jurisdiction'. He argued that the supernatural locale represents the pre-colonial period of a nation and its cultural unity, which colonialism attempts to eradicate or marginalise through its narratives of improvement: 'the atmosphere of myth and magic [...] integrates me in the traditions and the history of my district or of my tribe, and at the same time reassures me, it gives me a status, as it were identification paper'. In this occult sphere, 'the settler's powers are infinitely shrunken'.<sup>5</sup> Under colonial domination, such national culture 'very quickly becomes a culture condemned to secrecy' and, consequently, a 'clandestine culture' emerges where faithfulness to the nation can be expressed.<sup>6</sup> For Fanon, imperial resistance had to involve a return to the hidden occult realm, to unite peoples through cultural traditions and continue the pre-colonial national self. The expression of a counter-cultural, ancestral identity depended 'on a belief in the importance and possibility of "recovering" memories which were once there and which have since been "lost" or "hidden"' and the occult sphere provided such memories and consequently an 'identification paper'.<sup>7</sup>

Fanon's cultural paradigm can be fruitfully considered in the context of late nineteenth-century Ireland. Laura O'Connor argues that resisting acculturation in Ireland to England, 'resistance to colonial rule', often involved an attempt to reanimate Ireland's indigenous culture. She argues that this effort was a form of

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<sup>4</sup> Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>7</sup> Ann Rigney, 'Plenitude, Scarcity and the Circulation of Cultural Memory', *Journal of European Studies*, 35. 1 (2005), 11-28 (p. 13).

anamnesis, 'remembrance of what one has never consciously known'.<sup>8</sup> Such resistance through the recovery of what was supposedly past is evident in the work of Douglas Hyde, particularly his 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' (1892), and later in Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland* (1924). Corkery demonstrated that the ancestral Irish self had been branded as a dying or past stage – as 'barbaric' – by Ascendancy historians.<sup>9</sup> He aimed to counteract this by showing that the ancestral self wasn't dead, only hidden, and re-engaged with it in order to recover this identity. Undermining stadialist narratives that marginalised particular cultures often involved revealing that the past can 'erupt back into the present and disrupt the progressive narrative of the historical'.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Edward Said wrote of Yeats, who he believed resisted English imperialism, as performing a 'disruptive return to spiritual ideals that had been lost to an overdeveloped, modern Europe'.<sup>11</sup> For some, the return to a less rational sphere was a means of defining and continuing the ancestral self.

One of the most effective ways to express and recover such ancestral identities at the *fin de siècle* was through secret societies. Esoteric occultists often used secret spaces and clubs to express and conceal their counter-cultural ideas, and these attracted and inspired many *fin-de-siècle* cultural nationalists. Yeats's planned Order of Celtic Mysteries is a particularly clear dramatisation of Fanon's idea that the occult sphere supported national resistance to acculturation: the Order was a Celtic Irish equivalent of the Golden Dawn that created a specific space to express and develop Irish myths and an ancestral, druidic identity.<sup>12</sup> 'Improvement' and assimilation were challenged by Yeats through the occult sphere.

This discourse concerning a truer ancestral identity that had become lost or obscured because of cultural diffusion or assimilation is not alien to Scotland, which often shared a rhetoric of nationalism with Ireland. For instance, several figures

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<sup>8</sup> Laura O'Connor, *Haunted English: The Celtic Fringe, the British Empire, and De-Anglicization* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland: A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Terry Eagleton and others, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> Claire Nally, *Envisioning Ireland: W. B. Yeats's Occult Nationalism* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 22-30.

associated with the later Scottish Renaissance believed that Scotland's history and culture had become hidden or frozen and had to be contacted and recovered, particularly Edwin Muir. 'Scotland 1941' expresses the view that Scotland's true self was stripped and crushed by the Reformation. Similarly, 'Scotland's Winter' (1935) depicts Scots as living a 'frozen life' while walking over the graves of their national heroes.<sup>13</sup> Although Muir's image of a frozen Scotland suggests a springtime of reanimation and reconnection can occur, it nonetheless presents an older, truer self as marginalised or lost.

What is yet to be acknowledged in narratives of Scottish cultural history is that this understanding of a more authentic, ancestral Scottish identity as frozen or hidden was also present at the *fin de siècle*, a further line of continuity between the 1890s and the 1920s. Critics have also failed to recognise that the enthusiasm for the occult sphere, as a means to recover ancestral selves, was evident in Scotland in this period, in a manner that was closely akin to what was occurring in Ireland. This chapter argues that practical supernaturalism – attempts to contact, inhabit or understand the supernatural world through applied or theoretical discipline, including esoteric occultism and exoteric spiritualism – supported the Scots Renaissance in several ways. I argue that Geddes and his wider community looked to and invoked practical supernaturalism as it offered ideas, social structures and a symbolic language that helped evoke the capability of the present day to recover connection with stronger days of nationality, even national origins, and provided ideas for protecting and preserving identity for future continuation. These features were necessary for satisfying, what can be called, the cultural nationalist desire for continuation by confirming connection with the past or origin – presenting 'a tradition of continuity'.<sup>14</sup> This 'sense of continuity' encouraged a unified national community that could overcome Scotland's divided ethnicity.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Edwin Muir, 'Scotland's Winter', in *Scottish Literature in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, ed. by David McCordick (Dalkeith: Scottish Cultural Press, 2002), p. 262 (l. 28).

<sup>14</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 150.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

The first section of this chapter examines one of the inspirations for *fin-de-siècle* occultism, the enthusiasm for ancient Egyptian culture, and how this alone had ties to Scottish cultural nationalism, principally because it helped orientalise Scotland further but also allowed cultural nationalists to articulate the myth of Scotland's Egyptian descent. The chapter then goes on to discuss two occult societies which ancient Egyptian culture inspired, the Theosophical Society and the Golden Dawn, and examines how the latter in particular provided a space to express disruptive identities, including neo-Jacobite and ancestral Scottish identities, which had ties to the Scots Renaissance. Following this, the main part of the chapter examines Geddes's planned society for the contributors to *The Evergreen* (through treating previously unexamined archival material) and demonstrates how its design strongly appears to have drawn from esoteric languages in order to create a counter-cultural space to express an ancient Scottish identity, much like Yeats's Order in Ireland. Through practical supernaturalism, anxieties over connections to the past and the continuation of national identity could be mitigated. From here, Chapter 5 will consider how such lines of continuation were popularised through pageantry.

In the process of making the above arguments, I challenge two common misunderstandings of figures in *fin-de-siècle* Scotland. Too often critics remove Geddes from his interests in mysticism and the occult, reducing discussion on him to his town planning activities and the more obvious aspects of the Outlook Tower. He is also sometimes considered a late-Enlightenment figure who is guilty of 'excessive empiricism'.<sup>16</sup> The chapter illustrates that Geddes's interests were far more complicated than is commonly thought. Additionally, the chapter aims to further demonstrate that Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald were not simply decorative artists, as expectations often suggest, but were acutely aware of and interested in the wider enthusiasm for representing Hermetic symbols.

This chapter principally speaks to the first two research questions: how did Decadence support Scottish cultural nationalism and to what extent was the Scots

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<sup>16</sup> Sofia G. Leonard, 'The Context and Legacy of Patrick Geddes in Europe', in *The City after Patrick Geddes*, ed. by Volker M. Welter and James Lawson (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 71-87 (p. 79).



Renascence a product of its political and historical contexts? I demonstrate how practical supernaturalism, often aligned with Decadence, was used to subvert narratives of stadialism, in much the same way as it was in Ireland, and highlight the importance for many of recovering the past, as opposed to overcoming it. The way the practical supernaturalism of the Scots Renascence anticipated some ideas associated with the Scottish Renaissance and the enthusiasm for various aspects of practical supernaturalism across Scotland are also considered; these discussions speak to the third and fourth research questions by demonstrating how common particular ideas were throughout Scotland in his period and how these ideas were connected to later developments.

## **4.2 Egyptian Scotland**

The revival of interest in the esoteric in this period was partly a consequence of a heightened awareness of Egypt which in itself had a role to play in the Scots Renascence. Ancient Egypt offered Scottish cultural nationalists not only a further myth of origin for the nation but also a Hermetic language that would inspire the design of counter-cultural spaces in Scotland.

In this period there was a great interest in Egyptian culture and Hermeticism internationally on account of archaeological findings and museum exhibitions. In the United Kingdom, interest was particularly stimulated at the *fin de siècle* because Britain had taken physical control of the Suez canal, following the Convention of Constantinople (1888). These events led to a rise in publications on Egypt, including E. A. Wallis Budge's facsimile editions of the Papyrus of Ani, published in 1890 and 1894, and various debates about Egypt, including whether Egyptian religion derived from Africa (Budge's view)<sup>17</sup> or from Caucasian invasion, the theory advanced by Flinders Petrie. Oscar Wilde's 'The Sphinx' poem, mentioned in Chapter 2, and

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<sup>17</sup> *The Book of the Dead*, ed. by E. A. Wallis Budge (New York: Gramercy Books, 1999), p. 269.

Stoker's *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (1903) are two texts that are testament to the impact of ancient Egypt on European culture in the period.

Scotland was not removed from this cultural phenomenon. Indeed, it was noted in the period how substantial Scotland's Egyptian museum collections were.<sup>18</sup> Egyptian culture had also influenced Scottish art and architecture in the latter half of the nineteenth century, notably embodied by Alexander Thomson's Egyptian Halls in Glasgow (c.1872). What is important to note for this study is that many Scottish cultural nationalists were fascinated by Egypt and associated Scotland or Celtic culture with it: Scottish 'Egyptomania' was part of the wider phenomenon but it developed a specific accent.



Figure 4.1: Pittendrigh Macgillivray, *Der Zeitgeist*, illustration for *The Evergreen*, 1895

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<sup>18</sup> 'Glasgow and its Mummy Cases', *Glasgow Herald*, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1891, p. 4.

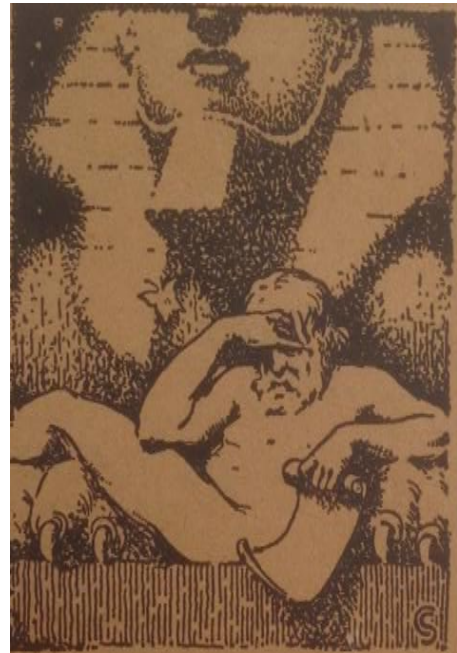
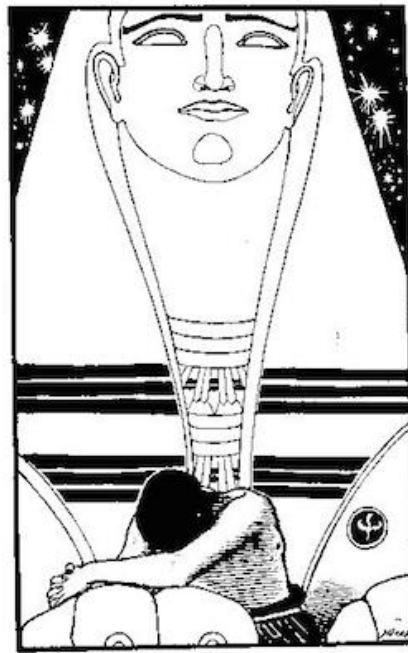


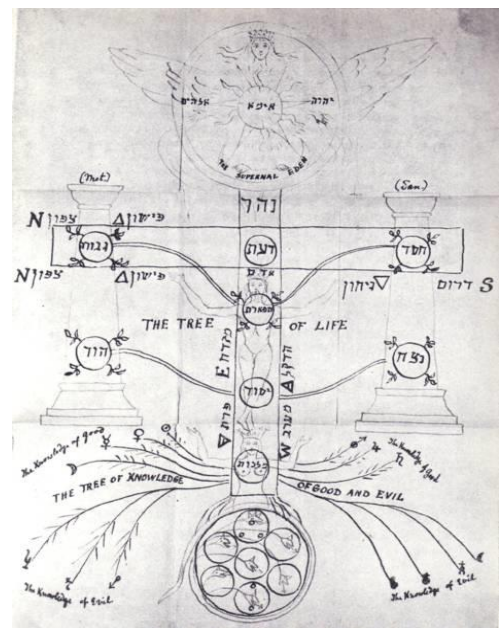
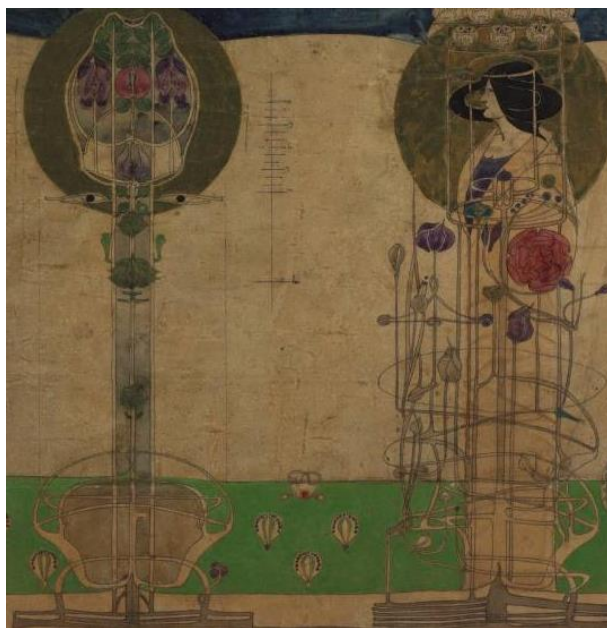
Figure 4.2 and 4.3: [left] John Duncan, *The Sphinx*, illustration for *The Evergreen*, 1896; [right] Cover for *The Masque of Ancient Learning*, 1913



Figure 4.4: John Duncan, *Aoife*, oil on panel, c.1915 (City of Edinburgh Council)

Egyptian culture was frequently yoked with Celtic culture in this period, particularly evident in the cultural productions by the Outlook Tower community. Geddes was keen to equate Celtic and Egyptian traditions in his writings – he compared the Celtic cairn and Egyptian pyramid, seeing them both as the embodiment

of primeval art, and discussed sphinxes in the context of Celtic Art –<sup>19</sup> and this is reflected in the visual products at Ramsay Gardens. The cover of *The Masque of Ancient Learning* (Figure 4.3) presents Geddes posed naked, thinking on an Egyptian sphinx. Sphinxes also appear in *The Evergreen*, a Celtic Revival magazine, on numerous occasions (Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.16). *Aoife's* crown, in John Duncan's portrayal of the Celtic sorceress (Figure 4.4), is flat and plumed, two features which can also be found on ancient Egyptian crowns. Furthermore, Riccardo Stephens, a writer who was part of the Outlook Tower community, represented the recurring appearance of a sphinx head throughout Edinburgh in *The Cruciform Mark*, a novel which portrays the occultism of the Ramsay Garden culture in this period, discussed in more detail below. Egyptian culture was clearly felt to be allied to the Celtic cause.



Figures 4.5 and 4.6: [left] Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Design for a stencilled mural decoration [detail], Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms, Buchanan Street, Glasgow, 1896, (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow 2015), [right] 'Emblematic Tree of the Garden of Eden' in MacGregor Mathers's Notebook<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Patrick Geddes, untitled paper on the Celtic Cross, pp. 1-3 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/13].

<sup>20</sup> This image is reproduced in Kathleen Raine, *Yeats the Initiate: Essays on Certain Themes in the Work of W. B. Yeats* (Mountrath: The Dolmen Press, 1986).

The interest in Egypt was also widely evident in Victorian and Edwardian Glasgow. Contemporary critics were quick to notice the interest in Egyptian esoterica in the Glasgow School's work: one, when commenting on 'Young Glasgow' stated that it was 'the sons and daughters of Scotland, who appear to be most strongly influenced by Egypt'.<sup>21</sup> Recently critics have begun to notice an interest within the Glasgow School for the 'neo-occult'.<sup>22</sup> Timothy Neat and Dai Vaughan have outlined some examples of ancient Egyptian symbols evident in the Glasgow School's work; for instance, Vaughan demonstrates the use of the scarab beetle formation to Mackintosh's 'The Wassail' gesso panel (see Figure 3.8). The reason he gives for this is that it was a symbol of directing 'renewal and regeneration',<sup>23</sup> a meaning which would have resonated with Geddes, who also included it in his work (see Figure 4.16). When the Glasgow School's work is turned to, numerous Egyptian references are evident.

The Glasgow School came to ancient Egypt partly through W. R. Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (1892), which Mackintosh is known to have read.<sup>24</sup> This book outlines Kabbalistic ideas, including the tree of life,<sup>25</sup> suggestions of astral projections and levels ('as above the flat earth, so below it, there are regions inhabited by men')<sup>26</sup> and also discusses Egypt in detail, including an incident where a King encounters his father, Ra, in an obelisk sun temple.<sup>27</sup> It is easy to see the influence of these ideas in Lethaby's study in the Glasgow Four's works, particularly in Mackintosh's wall decorations for Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms (Figure 4.5), which include a tree of life – a symbol that was key to the Glasgow School's art.<sup>28</sup> The form of the tree is highly similar to a sketch by a fellow enthusiast for Egyptian culture, S. L. MacGregor Mathers (Figure 4.6) – who is considered in more detail in the next section. Mathers also depicts a tree of life with figures rising from a bud, progressing upwards on a tree

<sup>21</sup> Gleeson White, 'Some Glasgow Designers. Part I', *The Studio*, 11 (1897), 86-100 (p. 88).

<sup>22</sup> David Brett, *C. R. Mackintosh: The Poetics of Workmanship* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> Dai Vaughan, 'Secret Symbols and Hidden Meanings', *Journal of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society*, 84.1 (2003), 4-5 (p. 4).

<sup>24</sup> Brett, p. 142.

<sup>25</sup> W. R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005), p. 108.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>28</sup> William Hardie, *Scottish Painting: 1837 to the Present* (Glasgow: Waverley Books, 2010), p. 116.

which is topped with a crown, almost identical to Mackintosh's tree of life. The female figures surrounding the tree of life in Mackintosh's image, who are also framed by trees, complement the eyes of Ra in the centre of the tree of life, that evokes a human. There are also serpents surrounding the tree of life which are 'symbols of the royal house in Ancient Egypt'.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Margaret and Frances Macdonald's candle sconce (Figure 4.7) includes several eyes of Ra, defining the edges a peacock. The proto-surrealist enthusiasm for eyes here creates an unnerving voyeuristic artwork, with the sconce acting as a form of surveillance, suggestive of the presence of unseen spirits elsewhere in the room. Such borrowings from the language of Egyptian esoterica demonstrate the fascination of the Glasgow School, like the Outlook Tower, with Egypt.



Figures 4.7: Margaret and Frances Macdonald, Candle sconce, beaten copper, c.1896 (Victoria and Albert Museum)

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<sup>29</sup> Timothy Neat, *Part Seen, Part Imagined: Meaning and Symbolism in the Work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), p. 117.



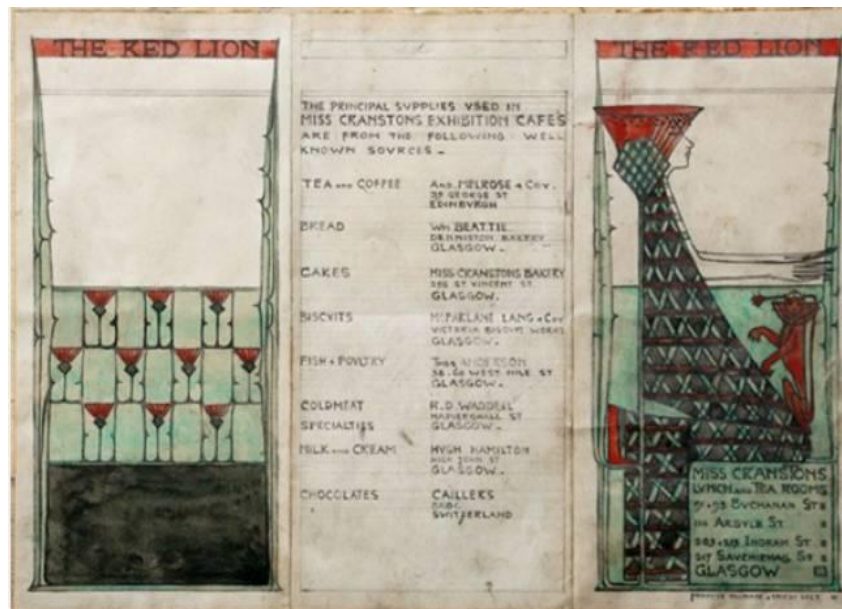


Figure 4.8: Frances Macdonald, Design for Miss Cranston's 'The Red Lion' Cafe Menu, 1911 (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection)

Why those associated with the Scots Renaissance were so interested in Egyptian culture, and placing it in the context of Celtic culture, is hard to pinpoint. Besides helping to 'other' and 'orientalise' Scotland further, one likely explanation is that, at the *fin de siècle*, the Scottish Egyptian myth of descent resurfaced. At the Scottish National Pageant at Saughton Park (1908), which Duncan contributed to and Geddes may have as well (discussed in Chapter 5), several mythological origin figures were portrayed in a narrative of Scottish history, including many of the pagan gods and heroes discussed in Chapter 3, and Scots Pharaoh was among them. Geoffrey Keating's history of Ireland (c.1630), which responded to Galfridian claims that Britain had first been settled by Brutus, argued that Niul – husband of Scots, Pharaoh's daughter, who bore the child Gadelas – was sent abroad to foreign parts and 'ordered his People, who he designed to settle as a Colony in some convenient Country, not to forget that they were Natives of Scythia, that they should distinguish themselves by the name of Scuit or Scots'.<sup>30</sup> This territory was both Ireland and Scotland, which was key – not only does the myth have ties to the Declaration of Arbroath, where Scythia is mentioned, but the Egyptian foundation myth linked Scotland more closely to

<sup>30</sup> Geoffrey Keating, *A General History of Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1861), p. 97.

Ireland than Britain as a whole, which was typical of Scottish cultural nationalism in the period (notably through the enthusiasm for Columba and Iona, discussed in Chapter 5). The Egyptian origin myth helped to distinguish Scotland and suggest its alternative origins to England. In other periods of Scotland's cultural history, there have been attempts to link Scottish culture to Egypt for similar ends – Allan Ramsay was interested in Scotland's Egyptian foundational myth and using the 'Doric' tongue of Theocritus, the Egyptian court poet, to inspire vernacular literature.<sup>31</sup> In a period when this myth was resurfacing, it is likely that part of the reason the figures of the Scots Renaissance were representing Egyptian culture, especially in Celtic contexts, was to subtly invoke the Scotland-Egypt connection, to give Scotland a further myth of origin to distinguish the nation. Indeed, the Pharaoh figure and Scotland's national symbols (the thistle and the lion rampant) fuse in Frances Macdonald's design for a menu for Miss Cranston's 'The Red Lion' cafe (Figure 4.8), where the thistle becomes the headpiece in a profile that bears similarities to Egyptian temple illustrations. Here, as in other pieces, Egypt is portrayed as bound up with Scotland's collective identity. The fact that discussions about Egyptian Home Rule were increasing in this period may have influenced the comparison too as momentum for Scottish Home Rule was growing in this period (see Chapter 1).

A further likely explanation for the enthusiasm for Egyptian esoterica can be found in Mackintosh's notion that art was a place to express counter-cultural ideas, and he even correlated artists with magicians. In his essay 'Architecture', Mackintosh stated: 'Are you discontented with this world? This world was never meant for Genius to exist it must create another. (the invisible) What magician can do more?'.<sup>32</sup> Mackintosh suggests in this essay that art is a means to express counter-cultural ideas as well as the hidden and thus it is a form of magic; for him, 'our pencil is our wand'.<sup>33</sup> These claims are highly akin to Geddes statement, 'Wherever a man learns power over

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<sup>31</sup> Murray Pittock, *Material Culture and Sedition, 1688-1760: Treacherous Objects, Secret Places* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 65.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 'Architecture (1893)', in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers*, ed. by Pamela Robertson (Wendlebury: White Cockade Publishing, 1990), pp. 201-211 (p. 210).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.



Nature, there is Magic'.<sup>34</sup> Mackintosh's statements here suggest an interest in counter-cultural ideas and magic, which may underpin his (and others') interest in forms and symbols that are associated with the esoteric and occult. Indeed, the Glasgow Four's works seem to suggest a greater engagement with the occult than we know of; part of the problem with understanding occultism in relation to the Glasgow School is that very little evidence exists to confirm their engagement with and awareness of occult orders and societies.<sup>35</sup> As John Berger states, 'no doubt in Glasgow there is a Rosetta Stone, which makes clear the tangled reading of these designs'<sup>36</sup> but it has not yet been found. Nevertheless, what we do know is that their engagement with Egyptian esthetics is highly consistent with those who were involved in occult societies at the *fin de siècle*, societies which had roles to play (both directly and indirectly) in Scottish cultural nationalism.

### **4.3 Theosophy and the Golden Dawn**

Two groupings that heavily drew from Egypt in their designing of occult ideas and spaces were the Theosophical Society and the Golden Dawn and both had their ties to Scottish cultural nationalism. This section of the chapter argues that the theosophy movement in Scotland helped authenticate the image of Scotland as 'other', which indirectly supported some cultural nationalists' efforts, particularly those that tried to orientalise Scotland – as was discussed in Chapter 2. The Golden Dawn's connection to the Scots Renaissance was that it provided spaces to express and recover ancestral identities and its form appears to have greatly influenced the design of 'The Evergreen Club'.

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<sup>34</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Scots Renaissance', *The Evergreen*, 1 (1895), 131-139 (pp. 137-138).

<sup>35</sup> Neat, p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 181.

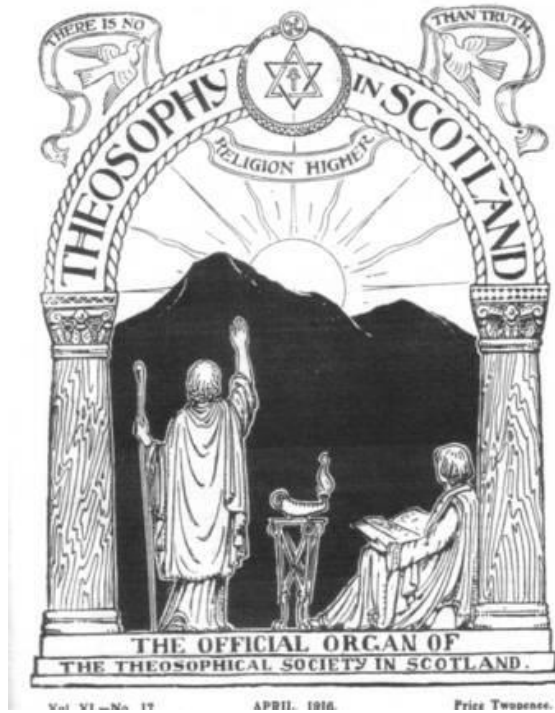


Figure 4.9: Cover of *Theosophy in Scotland* (1916)

The Theosophical Society was established in New York City in 1875 by Helena Blavatsky, among others. Like the later Golden Dawn, it was an occult society that was rooted in the Kabbalah but it was less elitist and became more popular than the Golden Dawn. Theosophy fused scientific and evolutionary awareness with religiosity, borrowing from esoteric Buddhism, and it saw reincarnation as bound up with the evolution of the soul.<sup>37</sup> It made 'the mysteries of ancient Egypt [and ...] the great Oriental philosophies thinkable to the average European'.<sup>38</sup> The movement was popular in Scotland: the first Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Scotland was established in Edinburgh (known as 'the Scottish Lodge') in 1884, which J. W. Brodie-Innes became President of, and between then and 1911 twelve lodges were established in Scotland. There were also many Theosophical Society lectures and it was even the topic of Max Müller's Gifford lecture at the University of Glasgow in 1892, demonstrating its respectability. Theosophy clearly had a substantial following as it

<sup>37</sup> Owen, p. 34; 'Questions and Answers', *Theosophy in Scotland*, 1 (1910), 13.

<sup>38</sup> 'Introductory', *Occult, Scientific, and Literary Papers, read at the Scottish Lodge*, 3.1 (1895), 1-2 (p. 2).

led to a Scottish mouthpiece for the society being produced - *Theosophy in Scotland* (Figure 4.9) – while the proceedings of the Scottish Lodge were also published.

Several associated with the Scots Renaissance were interested in Theosophy: Geddes attended Theosophical Society lectures and John Duncan and his wife were Theosophists.<sup>39</sup> Andrew Lang should also be mentioned in this context as The Psychical Research Society,<sup>40</sup> which he was President of in 1911, also had its ties to theosophy.<sup>41</sup> It is notable that figures who were interested in 'orientalising' Scotland, namely Duncan, were interested in Theosophy as some contributions to *Theosophy in Scotland* normalised the notion of Scotland as 'oriental'. In 'The Future Work of Scotland', Brother Atisha notes that 'in many respects Scotland is a chosen land [...] some of the sacred spots seem still to be *alive* with the spirit of the old gods and initiates'.<sup>42</sup> The Celtic nations more broadly are also viewed as counterparts to the theosophy movement: 'not only Scotland, but Ireland too, and Wales (when she is once struck with celestial fire) are all capable of penetrating into the deep mysteries of the East; for many Oriental traits still linger in the Celtic mind'.<sup>43</sup> The Celtic nations, and Scotland in particular, are portrayed as the iconic territories of spiritualism and Oriental-inspired theosophy. It is unlikely that this discussion was directly attempting to further cultural nationalism; the connection tries to root theosophy in an ideological homeland, to authenticate the occult. Nevertheless, such efforts played a role in the development of Scottish cultural nationalism. Like those who found existing paganism in Scotland, those who associated Scotland with the occult were validating the notion many cultural nationalists in the period were pursuing, of Scotland as more attuned to the occult and thus as culturally distinctive, distancing the nation from narratives of improvement that had divided the national identity, discussed in Chapter 1. It is

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<sup>39</sup> A review [source unknown] titled "Life after Death as Viewed in the Religion of Humanity" [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 11/3/94]; Patrick Benham, *The Avalonians* (Glastonbury: Gothic Image Publications, 1993), pp. 4; John Scott and Ray Bromley, *Envisioning Sociology: Victor Branford, Patrick Geddes, and the Quest for Social Reconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), pp. 48-51, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Luckhurst, Roger, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>41</sup> Owen, p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> Brother Atisha, 'The Future Works of Scotland', *Theosophy in Scotland*, 4 (1910) p. 61.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

unsurprising that this system of 'Oriental' thoughts appealed to several Scottish cultural nationalists.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was a further occult society with ties to Egypt. It was founded by three Freemasons (S. L. MacGregor Mathers, William Wynn Westcott and William Robert Woodman) in 1888 and its teachings revolved around Rosicrucianism, Kabbalah, the tarot, the tree of life and esoteric Buddhism. The Order was particularly appealing to cultural figures: Yeats, Machen and Sharp were members of the Order. It was not isolated from the Theosophical Society; several initiates of the Golden Dawn were involved with the Theosophical Society, including Brodie-Innes, who was Emperor, or chief, of the Golden Dawn's Edinburgh temple, Amen Ra.<sup>44</sup> Amen-Ra (the 'Scottish Temple')<sup>45</sup> was established in 1893 and largely followed the teachings of the wider Order, as Miss Emily Drummond's (second-in-command as Praemonstratrix) 'Book of Rituals' reveals.<sup>46</sup> The temple itself was square with a movable altar which had Amen-Ra's symbol on it.<sup>47</sup> As with the other Golden Dawn temples, each member had a motto or secret name; for example, Brodie-Innes's was H. Frater Sub Spe. Specifically, Amen-Ra also had Equinox ceremonials which every initiate was expected to attend, usually biannually.<sup>48</sup> The Golden Dawn's address book lists 56 initiates at Amen-Ra and it is believed that the temple ran until 1912, when it was succeeded by another order, 'Alpha and Omega',<sup>49</sup> but it kept the same membership and Brodie-Innes was made chief of it in Scotland and England.<sup>50</sup>

The contribution that the Golden Dawn made, both directly and indirectly, to Scottish cultural nationalism was that it provided a site to express counter-cultural identities. The Golden Dawn attracted members who wanted to express disruptive ideas and, for Mathers and Aleister Crowley in particular, it provided the means to

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>45</sup> Israel Regardie, *What You Should Know About the Golden Dawn* (Phoenix: Falcon Press, 1983), p. 33.

<sup>46</sup> Emily Drummond, 'The Book of Rituals' [The Library and Museum of Freemasonry: GBR 1991 GD 2/1/7]

<sup>47</sup> Summons of Amen-Ra Temple [The Library and Museum of Freemasonry: GBR 1991 GD 2/3/4/3]

<sup>48</sup> Bye-Laws of the Amen-Ra Temple [The Library and Museum of Freemasonry: GBR 1991 GD 2/3/4/2]

<sup>49</sup> Owen, p. 83.

<sup>50</sup> Ithell Colquhoun, *Sword of Wisdom: MacGregor Mathers and the Golden Dawn* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), p.138.

perform a Scottish identity, one that was aristocratic, associated with pre-Enlightenment periods and often took the form of neo-Jacobitism. In certain ways, this chimed with Scottish cultural nationalism in the period, which felt nostalgia for the Jacobite past (which was allied to the broader enthusiasm for the pre-Reformation past – discussed in Chapter 3) and wanted to revive earlier and stronger days of Scottish nationality. The Order was also directly linked to the Scots Renaissance as its ideas underpinned Geddes's creation of a society which appears to have been interested in preserving an ancestral, less incorporated Scottish self too.

As Ian Fletcher has argued, the *fin de siècle* witnessed a revival of interest in the Jacobite identity and the interest was reflected in many works of the period,<sup>51</sup> such as *The Song of the Stewarts* (1909), by *The Yellow Book* contributor Douglas Ainslie. Neo-Jacobitism was less concerned with pledging loyalty to the House of Stuart, although certain figures (notably Home Ruler, Theodore Napier) did. Instead, neo-Jacobites identified with and celebrated aspects of Jacobite culture. Indeed, Blaikie Murdoch, who went on to write extensively on Japan in the 1920s, argued that neo-Jacobitism was intimately connected to the culture of Aestheticism and Decadence: several Aesthetes imagined the time of the Stuart dynasty as a golden age for art, free from constraints to exist for its own sake, and they wanted to recover this ethos.<sup>52</sup> There was certainly nostalgia for Jacobitism felt by several of those who contributed to *The Evergreen* – a magazine inspired by *The Ever Green* by Allan Ramsay, who had his own ties to Jacobitism.<sup>53</sup> The magazine, which was described as 'neo-Catholic',<sup>54</sup> includes several references to the Jacobite past. In 'The Scots Renaissance', Geddes expresses the fact that

One day noble traditions long forgot will rouse a mightier  
literature, nobler localities still unvisited bring forth more  
enduring labours for their crown. Though Charlie may no come  
back again, though the too knightly king, so long expected back  
from Flodden, lie for ever 'mid the Flowers o' the Forest, though  
Mary's fair face still rouse dispute as of old, the Wizard's magic

<sup>51</sup> Ian Fletcher, *W. B. Yeats and his Contemporaries* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), pp. 83-123.

<sup>52</sup> W. G. Blaikie Murdoch, *The Royal Stuarts in their Connection with Art and Letters* (Edinburgh: J. & J. Gray & Co., 1908), pp. 13-16, 19.

<sup>53</sup> Pittock, *Material Culture*, p. 111.

<sup>54</sup> 'The Evergreen', *Glasgow Herald*, 27 May 1895, p. 11.

book still waits unmouldering in his tomb. The prophetic Rhymer listens from Elfland, Arthur sits in the Eildon Hills, Merlin but sleeps in his thorn'. (p. 137)

Geddes here feels nostalgic for a nobler Jacobite past and sees the revival of Arthurian mythology (discussed in Chapter 5) as the modern equivalent of this movement, a collection of symbols that can bind the people with a less militant heroism. In terms of visual symbolism, an image of Mary Queen of Scots, who was closely associated with Catholic and Jacobite imagery and celebrated by many so-called degenerates –<sup>55</sup> including Swinburne,<sup>56</sup> closes the Spring Volume (Figure 4.10). This decoration was executed by Pittendrigh Macgillivray who was also a sentimental Jacobite – evidenced in his Jacobite poems in *Pro Patria* (1915). John Duncan's *Anima Celtica* includes a reference to the Jacobites too, with 'a dirk and bonnet typical of the weapons and dress of the 1745 Jacobite uprising',<sup>57</sup> and he used Mary Stuart and Jeanne D'Arc as subjects for other artworks. Likewise, Geddes's naming of his 'Scots College' in Montpellier may reflect this context as other Colleges of this name served as refuges for Scottish Jacobites. Although Geddes does not appear to have had any commitment to the House of Stuarts, *The Evergreen* includes several references to Jacobite symbolism.

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<sup>55</sup> Nordau, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> For discussions on Swinburne's neo-Jacobitism, see Curtis Dahl, 'Swinburne's Loyalty to the House of Stuart', *Studies in Philology*, 46.3 (1949), 453-469.

<sup>57</sup> Murdo Macdonald, 'Anima Celtica: Embodying the Soul of the Nation in 1890s Edinburgh', in *Art, Nation and Gender: Ethnic landscapes, myths and mother-figures* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 29-37 (p. 32).



Figure 4.10: Pittendrigh Macgillivray, *Maria Regina Scotorum*, illustration for *The Evergreen*, 1895

The Golden Dawn was a key site for expressing this neo-Jacobite identity and an ancestral Scottish past. In doing so, the neo-Jacobites mimicked their Jacobite predecessors who had used secret societies and symbolism to maintain and recover their identity when it was suppressed.<sup>58</sup> As has been well documented, both Mathers – who formed friendships with Yeats and Sharp – and his rival Crowley were neo-Jacobites who tried to adopt Scottish nationality, despite neither being Scottish. As John Symonds notes:

Crowley, at a later date, dubbed himself the Laird of Boleskine and Abertarff for no greater reason than that he had a one-storeyed house of that name on the shore of Loch Ness. Later, Mathers transposed his adopted and real names to become Mathers MacGregor; then, after he had gone to live in Paris, to the Chevalier MacGregor. Nightly he changed into Highland dress and danced the sword dance with a knife (*skean-dhu*) in his stocking, a remarkable performance for the son of a merchant's clerk, an Englishman who never set foot in Scotland until the spring of 1897, when he inspected the Golden Dawn's Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh and caught a cold.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> For more on Jacobite secret societies, see Pittock, *Material Culture*, pp. 64-72.

<sup>59</sup> John Symonds, *The Beast 666: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (London: The Pindar Press, 1997), p. 22.

Like the Laird of Boleskine, Mathers and his wife Moina (sister of Henri Bergson) posed as the Count and Countess of Glenlyon in an attempt to claim Scottish nobility.<sup>60</sup> Like Mathers, Crowley was also known to don traditional Scottish garb,<sup>61</sup> not least the MacGregor tartan,<sup>62</sup> to further the image of himself as a Scottish nobleman and he joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1894. Crowley even adopted the name of MacGregor, signing letters Aleister MacGregor and,<sup>63</sup> although he was named Edward Alexander, he changed his forename: 'preferring a Scottish variant, he called himself "Aleister"'.<sup>64</sup> He even identified himself as a 'High Tory and Jacobite'.<sup>65</sup> Part of the reason behind these performances is that both wanted to return to a period of aristocratic nobility, removed from utilitarianism and commercialism: Crowley fantasised about having ancient, aristocratic Druidic roots from youth,<sup>66</sup> while Mathers quested for a more glamorous ancestry, seeing himself as "the last descendent of a Scottish king".<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Mathers's motto in the Golden Dawn was 'S Rioghal Mo Dhream'<sup>68</sup> (My race is royal – the MacGregor clan motto) and he also saw himself as James IV reincarnated.<sup>69</sup> Part of the lure of occult societies for neo-Jacobites like Crowley and Mathers was that it offered counter-cultural spaces to articulate and develop cultures and return to the past which, indirectly, supported attempts to reclaim and connect to an ancestral Scottish self, which was key to Scottish cultural nationalism.

Besides these indirect connections, the Golden Dawn did have some direct links to the Scots Renaissance. Mathers imagined himself as a defender of Scottish cultural and political identity: Yeats stated that Mathers 'imagined a Napoleonic role for himself, a Europe transformed to his fancy, Scotland a principality, Egypt restored'.<sup>70</sup> Mathers also sought to re-establish the Celtic pantheon (like Yeats) which was partly the

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<sup>60</sup> Colquhoun, p. 178.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>63</sup> Tobias Churton, *Aleister Crowley: The Biography* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2011), p. 57.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>67</sup> Colquhoun, pp. 80, 85.

<sup>68</sup> Owen, p. 57.

<sup>69</sup> Churton, p. 40.

<sup>70</sup> (cited in) Colquhoun, p. 93.



purpose behind his planned magazine *Isis*,<sup>71</sup> a name which suggests that the ancient esoterica of the Celts and the Egyptians were interdependent for Mathers. This detail further supports the reading that the numerous Egyptian references in *The Evergreen* were not simply accidental and were connected to the Scots Renaissance. Mathers's ideas were not far removed from Brodie-Innes's, the Emperor of Amen-Ra, who was close to Mathers and whose writings fit into the wider trend of *fin-de-siècle* cultural nationalism. Not only was Brodie-Innes's father a member of the New Spalding Club which published Historical Papers on the Jacobite Period in 1895 but Ithell Colquhoun has stated that he may have been a member of the White Rose Society – a neo-Jacobite club.<sup>72</sup> Brodie-Innes's writings reveal that he was concerned with recovering the Celtic identity from complete incorporation; he wrote in 1917:

Altogether the foot of the Saxon has been very heavy on the west, and the old occultism and the old fairy lore have retreated out of sight, and largely I fear out of mind [...] I have tried to string together a few rambling memories [...] I can only vouch for their truth as personal experiences of a time when the occultism of the Celtic west was not only a very real thing, but was looked on as utterly natural.<sup>73</sup>

It is important to note here that Brodie-Innes believed that an identity may exist even if it could not be seen and that he styles his work as concerned with preserving the marginal. Brodie-Innes also worked to maintain the independence of Scottish Lodge of the Theosophical Society, according to R. A. Gilbert.<sup>74</sup> Both Mathers and Brodie-Innes clearly had an interest in defying the incorporation of Scottish and Celtic identity. This fact may even have informed the Golden Dawn as it is known that members became disgruntled over how the Golden Dawn was becoming defined by Mathers's and Brodie-Innes's ideas. Annie Horniman, who was expelled from the Golden Dawn for not continuing to give Mathers money because he was using it for political over

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> J. W. Brodie-Innes, 'Some Celtic Memories', in *The Sorcerer and his Apprentice: Unknown Hermetic Writings of S.L. MacGregor Mathers and J. W. Brodie-Innes*, ed. by R. A. Gilbert (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1983), pp. 101-114 (pp. 101-2).

<sup>74</sup> R. A. Gilbert, 'Introduction', in *The Sorcerer and His Apprentice: Unknown Hermetic Writings of S. L. MacGregor Mathers and J. W. Brodie-Innes*, ed. by R. A. Gilbert (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1983), pp. 7-12 (p. 10).

magical purposes,<sup>75</sup> noted on this topic that 'Mr Brodie Innes boasted to me that he was in continual correspondence on political matters with Mr Mathers not on Order business'.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps their shared interest in reviving the Celtic pantheon and neo-Jacobitism started to define the Golden Dawn. The Golden Dawn may not only have provided the structure to express a disruptive, older Scottish self but there may even have been attempts to mobilise these temples in the name of cultural nationalism or Celtic Revivalism. Beyond these ties to Scottish cultural nationalism, the most direct connection between the Golden Dawn and Scots Renaissance was 'The Evergreen Club'.

#### **4.4 The Evergreen Club**

What has been little understood of Geddes is the importance of the occult to his ideas regarding the Scots Renaissance. Characterisations of him as a man of 'excessive empiricism' have inhibited considerations of his interest in practical supernaturalism or secret societies. Contrary to such characterisations, his writings and thinking behind the Outlook Tower, often regarded simply as a sociological centre, demonstrate the various ways the language and ideas of occultism were drawn on and these interests were frequently connected to his civic and national projects, including the formation of the Evergreen Club. Through Geddes and those around him, we see how the occult could offer ideas to help develop a structure for counter-cultural identities and memories that could recover a 'truer' nationality.

In 'The Scots Renaissance', the importance of the occult and practical supernaturalism to Geddes's ideas on the revival of Scottish cultural identity is revealed. Here, he describes Edinburgh as an 'ice-pack of frozen culture', in a manner that anticipates Muir's 'Scotland's Winter' – Scottish culture has suffered a period of

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<sup>75</sup> Letter from Annie Horniman to William Peck on expulsion, 25 December 1896 [The Library and Museum of Freemasonry: GBR 1991 GD 2/4/1/12].

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

apparent death or dormancy. Towards the end of the essay, he evokes the nature of the nascent revival, when he describes watching over the tombs of national heroes:

And so in some young soul here and there the spirit of the hero and the poet may awaken, and press him onward into a life which can face defeat in turn. Such is our Scottish, our Celtic Renaissance – sadly set betwixt the Keening, the watching over our fathers dead, and the second-sight of shroud rising about each other. Yet this is the Resurrection and the Life, when to faithful love and memory their dead arise.<sup>77</sup>

To revive an unacknowledged cultural identity is compared to contacting the dead. Geddes uses the language of exoteric spiritualism and second-sight to suggest that recovering Scotland's national cultural identity requires both the ability to see what is not recognised and the desire to revive (through collective memory) what is gone. Here, he expresses his belief in celebrating Celtic 'archaic survival[s]' and his faith in the 'indestructible sovereignty of the ever-returning past' which can challenge stadialism and stimulate a sense of continuity and connection.<sup>78</sup> The importance of continuity to the Scots Renaissance is also evident in Geddes's use of the expression 'Ultimus Scotorum' in the essay to describe Blackie and Stevenson, as it indicates his belief that a stronger, ancestral identity has been preserved. His essay argues that these continuing flames need to be fanned.

The importance of recognising the continuing but hidden collective self through concepts associated with practical supernaturalism was similarly shared by William Sharp. When writing to Catharine Janvier, he stated: 'A deep current somewhere beneath the tide [...] sustains us. We have meeting-places that none knows of; we understand what few can understand; and we share in common a strange and inexplicable heritage'.<sup>79</sup> Like Geddes, Sharp, who was fascinated by the occult,<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> 'The Scots Renaissance', p. 139.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138; Notes by Patrick Geddes for a lecture to the Celtic Society, 1897 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/9].

<sup>79</sup> William Sharp, *The Washer of the Ford: And other Legendary Moralities* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1896), p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Sharp's interest in the occult has been researched by many; see William F. Halloran, 'W. B. Yeats, William Sharp and Fiona Macleod: A Celtic Drama, 1897', *Yeats Annual*, 14 (2001), 159-208 (pp. 159-166); A. Norman Jeffares, *W. B. Yeats, Man and Poet* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), pp. 107-109; Steve Blamires, *The Little Book of the Great Enchantment* (Arcata: R J Stewart Books, 2008), pp. 125, 154-158, 183-184; Thomas Hodd, 'The Celtic Twilight in Canada: William Sharp's Early Occult Influence on Charles G. D. Roberts and Bliss Carman', *Canadian Poetry*, 54 (2004), 37-55 (p. 39).

believed that Celtic Revivalism would have to involve contacting the lost or hidden past; he even believed he could channel Colum's spirit and portrayed his Fiona writings as a form of mediumistic contact with a Celtic identity.<sup>81</sup> For Sharp, the *Anima Celtica* – represented by Duncan – was in a 'spell-bound trance', another representation of the Celt as not dead but dormant, belonging to the occult sphere, and waiting for a 'blast' to be roused.<sup>82</sup> These notions of a past identity that was hidden and depended on the occult sphere and spiritualist contact for expression, were not simply rhetorical ideas for Sharp and Geddes: Geddes planned a society for the contributors to *The Evergreen* that had many ties to the Golden Dawn and bears marked connections to Yeats's Order of Celtic Mysteries, also derived from the Golden Dawn. It strongly appears as though this occult-inspired club intended to provide a space to express an ancestral, hidden self: to give people their 'identification paper', as Fanon called it.



Figures 4.11 and 4.12: [left] 'Outlook Tower', illustration in *Dramatisations of History*, 1923; [right] John Duncan, *The Witches' Well*, Edinburgh, cast iron, 1894 (author's photograph)

<sup>81</sup> Letter from William Sharp to Dr. John Goodchild, mid-May 1898, *The William Sharp "Fiona Macleod" Archive* <[http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Projects/Sharp\\_Mcleod/1898.pdf](http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Projects/Sharp_Mcleod/1898.pdf)> [accessed 18 November 2014]; Ernest Rhys, 'Everyman Remembers' (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1931), pp. 79-80.

<sup>82</sup> William Sharp, 'Introduction', in *Lyra Celtica: An Anthology of Representative Celtic Poetry*, ed. by Elizabeth A. Sharp (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1896), pp. xix-li (p. xliii)

'The Evergreen Club' was the product of a culture in Edinburgh that was captivated by esoteric occultism and supernaturalism. Geddes was deeply interested in the history of witchcraft in Scotland and frequently associated his Celtic Revivalism with practical supernaturalism. He wrote a collection of note cards on witchcraft which included references to 'Celtic witchery' and interestingly 'Fiona', associating Celtic culture with practical supernaturalism.<sup>83</sup> He also often used the three witches emblem as a symbol of the Outlook Tower (Figure 4.11). This emblem related to the Outlook Tower's history – witches were burned at the stake on the site of Ramsay Gardens, which was commemorated with a fountain designed by John Duncan (Figure 4.12), and the executed occultist Major Thomas Weir lived in this area in the seventeenth century. A further collaboration between Geddes and Duncan reveals their interest in associating Scotland with the unseen. In the Common Room mural project at Ramsay Gardens, where a collection of figures associated with Scotland are portrayed, several of them have ties to the occult, as is drawn out in the guide which accompanied the murals. These murals in general are 'pictures of the imagination, of magic and romance': ideas which are not 'dead, but modern and increasing'.<sup>84</sup> We are told that Michael Scott dealt 'mainly with astrology, alchemy, and the occult sciences', St Mungo practiced 'gentle magic' and John Napier of Merchiston 'dabbled in the occult'.<sup>85</sup> There is a clear attempt to select Scottish figures who they believed had links to the supernatural, not those who espoused stadialist ideas, such as Hume and Smith. With Geddes and Duncan, there is a desire to authenticate the notion of Scotland as a nation where imagination, magic and romance flourish, as a nation that has not, or cannot, fully succumb to improvement.

Riccardo Stephens, who contributed to *The Evergreen*, also associated those connected to the Scots Renaissance with practical supernaturalism. Stephens was a Cornish writer fascinated with the occult, whose poems on the Edinburgh witch trials and an unseen piper were anthologised in *Lyra Celtica*, under 'Contemporary Anglo-

<sup>83</sup> Card notes on Witchcraft, 1905 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 11/1/22].

<sup>84</sup> Patrick Geddes and others, *Interpretation of the Pictures in the Common Room of Ramsay Lodge* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1928), p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 9, 12.

Celtic Poets (Cornish)'. His novel *The Cruciform Mark* (1896), which represents magic, secret societies, *fin-de-siècle* culture and a series of strange deaths in Edinburgh, is largely set in and around Ramsay Garden. The Common Room and its murals are referenced while Professor Grosvenor, the 'volatile scientist' who is killed, is at least partly inspired by Geddes – his interest in the 'Philosopher's Stone', 'ascending spirals', 'the tree of Knowledge' and 'the past and the future' over the present (as well as the mention of the 'snake of Æsculapius' when the 'Celtic' protagonist Tregenna converses with him) align Grosvenor very closely to Geddes's interests, as will be demonstrated.<sup>86</sup> Stephens's representations confirm the Scots Renaissance's enthusiasm for practical supernaturalism while he himself furthers the association of Scotland with a disruptive magic. His novel is akin to Conan Doyle's 'John Barrington Cowles' (1886), set in Edinburgh, which also contains a dangerous female mesmerist and helps render the capital as a gothic over professional space.

What these various figures were doing was authenticating the idea that Scotland was in some way a supernatural territory, one that was popular amongst many in the late nineteenth century – an inheritance of Scottish Romanticism which tended to embrace a gothic image of the nation in order to authenticate the national self.<sup>87</sup> This image of Scotland as a particularly spiritual nation was peddled by a variety of figures internationally in the Victorian period. In H. R. Haweis's article 'Ghosts and their Photos', when listing all of the various clairvoyants, automatic writers and those who experience trances, Scotland is the only nation that is mentioned, noting that there are 'scores more in and out of Scotland'.<sup>88</sup> Huysmans's *Là-Bas* (1891) encourages the image when Des Hermies states that Scotland is the nation 'where sorcerers swarm', confirming Scotland as a principal supernatural locale.<sup>89</sup> Another Frenchman, Leo Taxil, associated Scotland with Satanic Magic through his Palladism hoax. Taxil claimed Palladism was revived in South Carolina as the Scottish Rite of Perfection and Heredom in the 1850s and he outlined that the

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<sup>86</sup> Riccardo Stephens, *The Cruciform Mark* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1896), pp. 48, 51-52, 193, 206, 219.

<sup>87</sup> Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 26.

<sup>88</sup> H. R. Haweis, 'Ghosts and their Photos', *Fortnightly Review*, 53 (1893), 116-129 (p. 118)

<sup>89</sup> Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Là Bas* (Cirencester: The Echo Library, 2006), p. 41.

*Sublime Ecossaise* was one of the degrees in the Adoption Rite, the most common.<sup>90</sup> John Ferguson, the great collector of literature on magic and witchcraft in Scotland, even concluded that 'a belief in magic in Scotland is older than any literature which has come before me',<sup>91</sup> suggesting how deeply rooted ideas about magic in Scotland were. Some portrayed the connection as a racial skill: one reviewer noted that the Scots have 'a certain kind of composition in the blood or temperament very favourable to a kind of spiritual communion',<sup>92</sup> while Daniel Dunglas Home, known as the 'great wizard of the north' who toured America in the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>93</sup> portrayed his 'second sight' as an inherited trait: 'my mother has also told me that her uncle, Colin Urquhart, and her uncle, Mr. Mackenzie, were also seers and gifted with the second sight'.<sup>94</sup> Despite being at the forefront of industrialism and commercial imperialism, Scotland was often still understood as the principal territory of authentic – even threatening – magic. By normalising this idea, Scottish cultural nationalists were continuing to other Scottish identity.

But the esoteric had other, more particular, roles to play in the Scots Renaissance. Practical supernaturalism was a tool that Geddes believed could help people imagine society anew, an idea which fed into his civic and national regeneration projects. The Outlook Tower, which was considered a cultural nationalist centre, was also imagined as a 'Temple of Vision',<sup>95</sup> as John Kelman states, with an aim 'to produce trained seers'.<sup>96</sup> Geddes wanted these seers to reveal the 'hiddenness of the obvious',<sup>97</sup> to reject the norm and create mentalities where 'new activities may develop, and upon a higher plane than customary ones': with Geddes, the occult provided a framework for expressing counter-cultural ideas.<sup>98</sup> Like several public

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<sup>90</sup> Robert Ziegler, *Satanism, Magic and Mysticism in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 55-72.

<sup>91</sup> John Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes on the Witchcraft Literature of Scotland* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 1897), p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> 'Scottish Characteristics', *The Leisure Hour*, 1480 (1880), 298-302 (p. 302).

<sup>93</sup> D. D. Home, *Incidents in My Life* (New York: Carleton, Publisher, 1863), p. 106.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>95</sup> John Kelman, *The Interpreter's House: The Ideals embodied in the Outlook Tower* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1905), p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'What is the Mystic Life', p. 2 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 11/1/93].

buildings in the late nineteenth century, including Alois Bastl's planned scheme for a 'Palace for Scientific Occult Societies' (1902) in Paris, The Outlook Tower (and Geddes's comments on it) reflects the need for a quasi-religious space to fill 'the spiritual vacuum'.<sup>99</sup> As Nietzsche stated: 'The time is past when the Church possessed the monopoly of reflection':<sup>100</sup> new forms of public space were required for self and collective reflection. Geddes referred to the Outlook Tower in these quasi-religious, quasi-occult terms, claiming: 'we have a temple, but what of the Mysteries? What of the initiation?'.<sup>101</sup> He also referred to his Camera as a 'wizard's mirror'.<sup>102</sup> Geddes's enthusiasm for alternative spiritual ideas is reflected in his interest in the Bahá'í faith (an interest shared with John Duncan and his wife, who was a friend of Wellesley Tudor-Pole) and his mysticism;<sup>103</sup> indeed, Boardman aptly describes him as 'a sceptical Western scientist *and* an Indian mystic'.<sup>104</sup> Geddes clearly wanted the Outlook Tower to become more of an occult temple than it was and hoped it would produce 'seers'. In his paper 'What is the Mystic Life', he outlines that he wanted to encourage a mystic life that can 'calm the ordinary life and subdue it'.<sup>105</sup> Part of Geddes's regeneration and cultural nationalist projects involved creating alternative spaces to imagine the world anew and develop different ideas.

One of these spaces was a planned society for contributors to *The Evergreen* which heavily drew from the language of the Golden Dawn and was at least partly designed to provide a space for a Celtic counter-culture and to express an ancestral self, with strong similarities to Yeats's Order of Celtic Mysteries. Geddes's involvement with the Golden Dawn is obscure. As yet, no textual evidence has been found to suggest that he was a member of the Golden Dawn, however Alexander Farquharson, who was Secretary of Le Play House, the hub of Geddes's and Branford's social betterment movement, claimed that 'Geddes was connected with the GD

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<sup>99</sup> Iain Boyd Whyte, 'The Spirit of the City', in *The City after Patrick Geddes*, ed. by Volker M. Welter and James Lawson (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 15-32 (p. 16).

<sup>100</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>101</sup> (cited in) Philip Boardman, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator, Peace-warrior* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 194.

<sup>102</sup> [T-GED 11/1/22].

<sup>103</sup> Murdo Macdonald, *Scottish Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 154; Boardman, p. 452.

<sup>104</sup> Boardman, p. 452.

<sup>105</sup> Geddes, 'What is the Mystic Life', p. 3 [T-GED 11/1/93].



[Golden Dawn] in some way'.<sup>106</sup> It is possible that Geddes could have been a member of the Golden Dawn as the address books which contain lists of the initiates are far from authoritative. However, even if Geddes was not an initiate of the Golden Dawn, it is undeniable that he was aware of it and shared many of the ideas espoused by the Order. For example, he made notes from Maeterlinck's study of mysticism,<sup>107</sup> as well as Arthur Edward Waite's *The Mysteries of Magic: a Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi*. Waite was a member of the Golden Dawn and this book covers various topics on occultism and specific concepts which the Golden Dawn adopted, including: Kabbalistic doctrines, conjuration, the astral body and tarot, and Geddes makes specific reference to the second part of the book: 'Doctrines of Occult Force'.<sup>108</sup> Geddes is also known to have read Edouard Schuré's *The Great Initiates*,<sup>109</sup> and he wanted to bring more of the ideas it espoused into his own system. Thus, it is clear that he was interested in and aware of the practices and ideas which the Golden Dawn was founded on. Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that he actively sought to encourage awareness about these ideas through the Outlook Tower. In order to prove this, both his work for *The Evergreen* and some of his rough notes in the Papers of Patrick Geddes archive need to be consulted together.

Amongst the Papers of Patrick Geddes are six small cards which Geddes penned, entitled 'The Evergreen Club'. The club appears to be a society Geddes was planning to establish which would include various similar facets to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. It seems as though the Club would consist of the contributors to *The Evergreen* as, elsewhere in papers on the periodical, he refers to an 'Authors' Society (+ Club)'.<sup>110</sup> This is unsurprising since the magazine had ties to the occult and it was consequently received as symptomatic of 'cette invasion de tous les ésotérismes'.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, many of those who contributed to *The Evergreen* were

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<sup>106</sup> Colquhoun, p. 89.

<sup>107</sup> Boardman, pp. 450-451.

<sup>108</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes on the theory of magic as religious awakening, c.1897 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 11/1/13].

<sup>109</sup> Boardman, p. 194.

<sup>110</sup> Rough notes by Patrick Geddes relating to *The Evergreen*, c.1895-1896 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/1/3].

<sup>111</sup> 'Some Illustrated Books', *The Times*, 24 May 1895, p. 13.

not only interested in the Celtic Revival but in distinguishing Scotland's national culture, which is reflected in the apparent cultural nationalist aspects of the club. Like occult orders, 'The Evergreen Club' was planned to be more than a social club, involving a 'ritual of initiation' with a 'Book of Chivalry' and the initiates would have secret names. The society would also have rules and a motto: the 'central idea of extirpating Boredom' along with supporting 'spiritual art – abjure cynical + decadent [sic]' and be a 'movement for directing moral upheaval'. Besides being a positive remedy to, what Geddes saw as, a debilitating Decadence – in opposition to the potentially productive Decadence discussed in Chapter 3, the Club was not just similar in structure to the Golden Dawn but was also closely bound up with its ideas and practice. Some of the words Geddes uses in his cards reveal this when considered together; they include: 'Arbor Vitae', 'Rose Croise', 'Thelema', 'Chapel – PG', 'robes' and 'wreaths'. Each of these will be considered to demonstrate the ties between the Evergreen Club and occult orders.

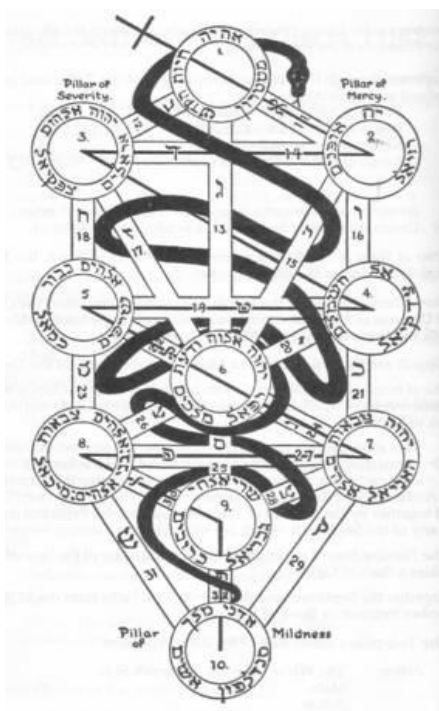


Figure 4.13 and 4.14: [Left] *Arbor Saeculorum*, illustration in *The Evergreen*, 1895, [Right] 'The Serpent on the Tree of Life'<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> This illustration appears in Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1986), p. 62.

The 'Arbor Vitae', or tree of life, was a central concept in the Golden Dawn, drawn from Kabbalah. Geddes's interest in the tree of life is reflected in his final contribution to the Spring edition of *The Evergreen* which presents a tree of life, the *Arbor Saeculorum* (Figure 4.13). Geddes's tree (guarded by sphinxes) does not present a personal, spiritual development through ten sepiroth from Malkuth (earth) to Kether (invisible sublimity) as in Kabbalah but presents the development of society stemming from roots in the animal world and flourishing with a bud at the top, although this in itself is highly reminiscent of the ascension and crown at the top of many Kabbalistic trees. The serpent-like smoke which links all of the various stages together in Geddes's design also echoes several representations of the tree of life in Kabbalistic iconography (Figure 4.14) and, what Mathers refers to as the 'serpent of wisdom',<sup>113</sup> a 'centripetal force, ever seeking to penetrate into Paradise',<sup>114</sup> or – as Yeats says – 'the Kabbalistic serpent-winding nature'.<sup>115</sup> This feature may have ties to Mackintosh's designs above (Figure 4.5), with ascending helical spirals, which also draw from Kabbalistic iconography. As was discussed in Chapter 3, Geddes's *Arbor* also partly challenges the notion of Enlightenment stadialism as he believed that each of these stages were intertwined with each other and the smoke represents the blindness of each generation to the thought and work of their ancestors.

The 'Rose Croise', or Rosy Cross, is a very clear reference to the symbol of the Rosicrucian Order, believed to have been established by the legendary alchemist Christian Rosenkreuz around the fifteenth century, consisting of a cross with a rose in the centre. Rosicrucianism, which fused Eastern philosophy with traditional Christian beliefs and claimed to harbour 'esoteric secrets',<sup>116</sup> was reviving across Europe in the period, most notably with Joséphin Péladan who was a member of the Ordre de la Rose-Croix 'before going on in 1891 to found his own Catholic version, the Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique' which sought to revive traditionalism and was nostalgic for the

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<sup>113</sup> S. L. MacGregor Mathers, 'Concerning the Symbolism of Self-Sacrifice', in *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic and Alchemy*, ed. by Francis King (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1971), pp. 131-140 (p. 131).

<sup>114</sup> Mathers, *Kabbalah*, p. 42.

<sup>115</sup> (cited in) Jeffares, p. 107.

<sup>116</sup> Di Pasquale, p. 56.

*ancien régime*.<sup>117</sup> For Nordau, Rosicrucianism was one of the features that marked Péladan as degenerate, or 'deranged'.<sup>118</sup> By the 1890s, Rosicrucianism's bond to Protestantism had loosened (indeed, Waite notes that Catholic initiation was accepted as early as 1710)<sup>119</sup> and it became the origin of the Order of the Golden Dawn. There was also a strong tradition of Rosicrucianism in Scotland, which Geddes may be alluding to here. David Stevenson has demonstrated that modern Freemasonry, and lodges with ritual functions, originated in Scotland in the seventeenth century from town craft guilds. These were implicated in the development of Rosicrucianism from 1598.<sup>120</sup> The 'Rosicrucian quest for ultimate secrets' (p. 104) led many interested in it in Scotland to the Masonic Lodges which claimed 'possession of arcane secrets' (p. 104). Stevenson also shows that there was detailed knowledge of Rosicrucianism throughout Scotland too (p. 101). Geddes's interest reflects the continuance of Rosicrucian ideas in Scotland but also a desire to develop a counter-culture that was interested in 'arcane secrets'.<sup>121</sup>

Geddes's reference to Thelema is striking and complex, especially considering we do not know when these cards were written. It is logical to assume that they were written at the time Geddes was working on *The Evergreen*, thus 1895-6. However, Thelema only became an idea particularly associated with occult orders in 1901, through Aleister Crowley (a key initiate of the Golden Dawn) who established a magical system entitled Thelema and named Boleskine House, which he bought off Mary Rose Hill Burton (a friend of Geddes's that contributed decorative panels to Ramsay Gardens), his Abbey of Thelema.<sup>122</sup> This system's philosophy was 'do what thou wilt – then do nothing else'.<sup>123</sup> Crowley, like Geddes, was clearly drawing upon Rabelais who wrote of an Abbey of Thélème in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, where 'do what thou wilt' was the philosophy. Strikingly, Boardman notes that Geddes

<sup>117</sup> Radolphe Rapetti, *Symbolism*, trans. by Deke Dusinberre (New York: Éditions Flammarion, 2005), pp. 88-89.

<sup>118</sup> Nordau, p. 225.

<sup>119</sup> Arthur Edward Waite, 'The Rosicrucian Brotherhood', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 263 (1884), 598-607 (604); for Freemasonry's links to Jacobitism, see Pittock, *Material Culture*, pp. 108-112.

<sup>120</sup> David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 96 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>121</sup> Neat argues that the Glasgow School were also influenced by Rosicrucianism; see Neat, pp. 120-132.

<sup>122</sup> Churton, p. 253; Geddes also visited Boleskine in 1895 to write on Celtic crosses.

<sup>123</sup> Aleister Crowley, 'The Message of the Master Therion', *The International*, 12 (1918), 26.

established an 'Abbey de Thélème' in the Mediterranean, to be used for excursions from Scots College in Montpellier, to improve university life and further his 'Agenda Synthetica'.<sup>124</sup> Although Geddes is not generally associated with hedonism, we can see hints of the Thelema attitude in his thinking, such as when he stated to his daughter Norah: 'I am still out for adventure, for all risks; and [do] not need Nietzsche to teach me to live dangerously'.<sup>125</sup> In this case, it appears that Geddes's conflation of Thelema with Rosicrucianism and Kabbalah antedates Crowley's similar intention and could be further proof that Geddes may have had greater ties and influence on the Golden Dawn than previously believed.

It is likely that the reference to the egotistical 'Chapel – PG' is also related to his Agenda Synthetica and a proto-occult mysticism as, on religion, he wrote:

Of course I believe in the Bible [...] and in the Koran, and in all the bibles of all people, whether savages or Buddhists, Celts or Christians. To those vast storehouses of past wisdom, one makes one's contribution. I make mine by seeing that Life is bigger and more wonderful than has been thought; and that all the gospels put together cannot encompass it. The ecstasy of the highest Mystics is one with the elemental life-emotion of the Biosphere.<sup>126</sup>

These comments which have ties to Mysticism, that is broadly understood as contact with the infinite or a transcendental order, and the Bahá'í faith's belief in the unity of religions, reveal that Geddes was less concerned with established religious ideas and it seems likely that such principles would be the basis of his chapel. The reference to 'wreaths' and 'robes' is also key as initiates of the Golden Dawn used robes and headgear in ceremonies and performances (Figure 4.15). Taken together, these small cards reveal a great concordance between Geddes's proposed Evergreen Club and the Golden Dawn, revealing stronger ties between the Scottish Celtic Revival and practical supernaturalism.

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<sup>124</sup> Boardman, p. 451.

<sup>125</sup> (cited in) Walter Stephen, 'Patrick Geddes – the Life', in *Think Local, Act Global: The Life and Legacy of Patrick Geddes*, ed. by Walter Stephen (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2011), pp. 17-38 (p. 37).

<sup>126</sup> (cited in) Boardman, p. 451.



Figure 4.15: Portrayal of S. L. MacGregor Mathers<sup>127</sup>

The symbolism of The Evergreen Club also strongly appears to have links to Scottish cultural nationalism. Geddes proposes the Symbolism of the club should involve a Celtic 'Druid Oak Tree' (and initially 'oak leaves'), a tree which he says is for 'the healing of the nations'. A cultural nationalist interpretation of this biblical phrase is supported by Geddes's styling of the Scots College as an institution for 'healing', of reviving Scottish identity and inter-nationality, in his verse 'Collège des Écossais, Montpellier'.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, he wanted to include a 'Round Table'. These two features reappear at Scots College: in the garden precinct, there was an oak tree and 'King Arthur's table'.<sup>129</sup> As was mentioned above and is discussed at length in Chapter 5, Geddes connected the Arthurian myth with the Scots Renaissance and compared Arthur with Charles Edward Stuart. The fact that Geddes associated these symbols that had links to Scotland with Scots College strongly suggests that they would have been included in the Club to reflect its Scottish or Celtic interests, which it would undoubtedly have had considering it was an author's club for contributors to a Scottish Celtic Revival magazine. The Club's symbolism indicates that it was intended, at least

<sup>127</sup> This image is reproduced in Owen, following p. 126.

<sup>128</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Collège des Écossais – Montpellier', p. 3 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 8/2/15].

<sup>129</sup> Andre Schimmerling, 'The Last Activity of Patrick Geddes's Life: The Scots College, Montpellier', in *The Outlook Tower: Essays on Urbanisation in Memory of Patrick Geddes*, ed. by J. V. Ferreira and S. S. Jha (Bombay: Popular Prakashan Private, 1976), pp. 51-53 (p. 52).

partly, for expressing and 'healing' a Scottish Celtic voice through a counter-cultural space. The club can be considered a parallel to Yeats's Order of Celtic Mysteries; indeed, Geddes's reference to the Druids in the plan is consistent with the Irish Order which was concerned with 'reviving Druidic mysteries', as George Russell stated to Fiona Macleod.<sup>130</sup> The Evergreen Club may even have provided a space for expressing neo-Jacobite ideas, like the Golden Dawn, as 'oak leaves' had been Jacobite symbols (see Chapter 3) and could still be associated with a neo-Jacobite identity in this period, evident in the abundant oak leaf decorations at Mount Stuart House, designed by Robert Rowand Anderson, which celebrated Catholic identity and the Stuart past. The symbolism strongly appears to point to a desire to express a hidden, ancestral Scotland – to recover the past through the occult sphere.

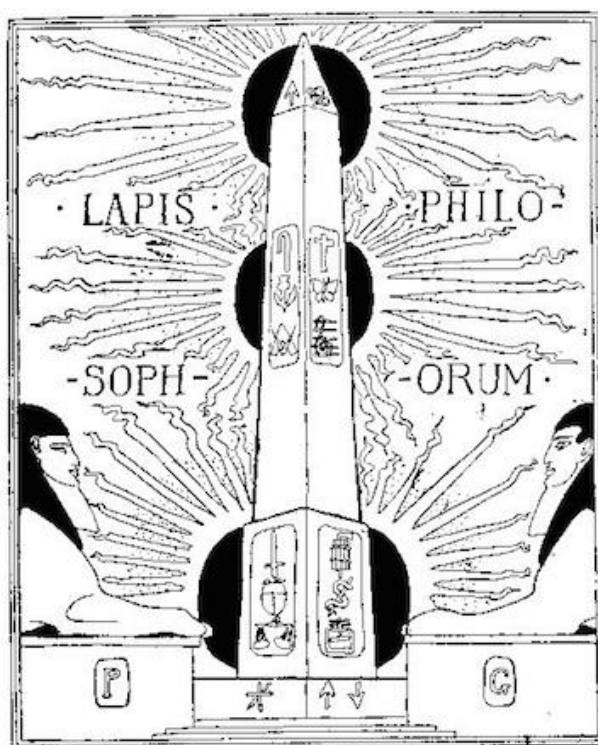


Figure 4.16: *Lapis Philosophorum*, illustration in *The Evergreen*, 1896

The apparent cultural nationalism of the club is confirmed by one of the decorations for *The Evergreen*. Beyond his inclusion of the *Arbor Saeculorum*, Geddes

<sup>130</sup> (cited in) Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 123.

also contributes *Lapis Philosophorum* to the final page of the final issue of *The Evergreen* (Figure 4.16). The concept of the Philosopher's Stone, and its associated idea of transmutation, was important in Golden Dawn magic and it was key for Geddes:<sup>131</sup> he believed it was 'scattered through the world',<sup>132</sup> and he conflated it with the Elixir Vitae.<sup>133</sup> The 'essentially hieroglyphic symbols [...] by the initiated for the initiated' in Geddes's *Lapis Philosophorum* also suggest links to the occult –<sup>134</sup> the sphinxes, obelisk and bursts of sun rays provide obvious connections but the scarab beetle, the Masonic square and compass (albeit upside down) and the alchemical symbol of the Rod of Asclepius all nod to esoterica. The arrows pointing both upwards and downwards suggest, like *Arbor Saeculorum*, that historical progression cannot be disconnected from its past. In the Papers of Patrick Geddes, there is a key to these symbols and the hieroglyphs are arranged to represent how a more primitive existence can generate community and lead to 'Eutopia'. Importantly, Geddes includes a thistle on the obelisk in *The Evergreen*, representative of Scottish nationality, alongside other symbols that he states represent 'comradeship' and 'communion'.<sup>135</sup> This is indicative of the importance of collectivism and nationhood for Geddes and his interest in portraying Scottish identity and the occult as interdependent. Together, this image expresses the need to recover the ancestral and define the national community which is bound up with the occult, much like his planned club.

*The Evergreen* and its society reveal Geddes's desire to closely associate Scotland with the occult and to draw from its symbolism and structures to create a space for a collective voice. As with Yeats's Order in Ireland, there strongly appears to be a desire to use occult images and societies to express Scottish identity. This language of the occult is also used in the decorative work for the Celtic Library. The

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<sup>131</sup> Wynn Westcott, 'Alchemy', in *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic and Alchemy*, ed. by Francis King (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1971), pp. 179-191.

<sup>132</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes on the association of ideas, alchemy, psychology, society and education [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 3/4/13].

<sup>133</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes on the Philosopher's stone and the Elixir Vitae [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 11/1/67].

<sup>134</sup> Patrick Geddes, *Dramatisations of History* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1923), pp. 76-77.

<sup>135</sup> Notes by Patrick Geddes on University Halls, etc [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/28].



gold inlay designs for the front and back cover of *The Washer of the Ford* borrow from many occult forms. Most notably, the image on the front cover, which consists of two thistles (Figure 4.17), stresses upward ascension and the interlinking nature of the forms in the middle column is not unlike those of the Kabbalistic tree. These forms also resemble interlinking compasses, which are symbols common to Freemasonic orders. The image of concentric circles, triangles, hidden thistles and a bursting sun on the back cover (Figure 4.18) is also similar to many features of the Golden Dawn, most notably the sun (literally a golden dawn) and the triangle, which reflect the imagery of the Amen-Ra temple and the Golden Dawn more widely. Again, the designs here are concerned with suggesting the affinity of Scotland and the Celtic Revival with secret societies and the occult.



Figure 4.17: Front [left] and back [right] cover designs, *The Washer of the Ford*, 1896

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Conclusions relating to practical supernaturalism and secret societies are particularly difficult to form. As Murray Pittock has argued of Jacobite secret societies and languages, 'they resist comprehensive analysis for the same reasons that made them

successful in the first place':<sup>136</sup> they were designed to be secretive. Despite this, some broad trends are apparent. Scottish cultural nationalists were interested in practical supernaturalism and they appear to have been so for three main interrelated reasons. Associating the national identity with practical supernaturalism helped to confirm the nation as 'other', unaccommodating to stadialist notions of improvement. Egyptian esoterica, associated with various forms of *fin-de-siècle* practical supernaturalism, offered the ability to link Scotland to Egyptian culture and helped articulate or support a further myth of descent. Most particularly, the occult inspired means of expressing and preserving an ancestral Scottish self, of contacting and recovering periods of healthier nationality. In these respects, supposedly degenerate occult orders and exoteric ideas supported Scottish cultural nationalism and the notion of national descent. How such notions of descent were more widely popularised in Scotland in this period through masques and pageants is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>136</sup> *Material Culture*, p. 94.

## **5 Allegory, History and Myth: Pageantry and the Popularisation of Descent**

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined how the cultural nationalist anxiety of continuity was partly appeased by drawing from the language and ideas associated with practical supernaturalism in various projects. However, many of these projects were reserved for the few, the initiated. In order to present myths of descent to a wider public, to provide a mass 'sense of continuity'<sup>1</sup> that could link the national populace to its imagined origins and challenge Scotland's identity divisions – discussed in Chapter 1, particular art forms would be needed. One of the most effective art forms for presenting and inspiring greater national feeling for myths of descent to a wider demographic was pageantry.

Many figures associated with the Scots Renaissance were concerned with making artwork and education more publicly accessible. Geddes was keenly interested in breaking down the divide between Town and Gown,<sup>2</sup> hoping to nurture 'student-citizens' with 'City and University ever renewing their own life and vigour as they enrich and widen, deepen and brighten that of youth'.<sup>3</sup> Geddes and Duncan's mural designs, discussed in Chapter 3, contributed towards making art and education more public. Geddes's belief in a public art that worked for the community over a private art for the wealthy is articulated in *Everyman His Own Art Critic* (1887), an essay stimulated by the Jubilee Exhibition in Manchester that year. He writes: 'Instead of this endless labour on little panels, scattered hither and thither to flap idly upon rich men's walls, grant any of these painters one continued task for his fellow-citizens, old or young – make him work for hall or school, for street or square, and see the result; see how the dormant thoughts will flash into activity, and the languid nerves be strung'.<sup>4</sup> This argument was most likely inspired by Ruskin, whose conception of art Geddes admired – noted in Chapter 3. Like several others, Geddes was interested in using murals to engage with a wider audience.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Geddes was instrumental in establishing the Town and Gown Association in Edinburgh in 1896.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Geddes, *Dramatisations of History* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1923), p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Geddes, *Everyman His Own Art Critic* (London: John Heywood, 1887), p. 27.

Allied to mural painting was an art form that was increasing in popularity in the late nineteenth century: pageantry. Clare A. P. Willsdon notes that 'the visualisation of history in murals' was 'a first cousin of theatre, and several mural artists were also stage and costume designers for plays and pageants'.<sup>5</sup> This tendency is evident in Scotland: for instance, John Duncan, William Hole, Phoebe Traquair, Jessie M. King and Patrick Geddes were involved in producing murals as well as pageants. Late nineteenth-century pageants were (usually large-scale) public displays and processions that 'consisted of allegorical scenes and sometimes of the dramatic representation of historical episodes'.<sup>6</sup> Some preferred to differentiate between the more 'serious', historical pageant and the more allegorical masque,<sup>7</sup> but the two terms were mostly synonymous in this period; this was certainly the case in Scotland.

Pageants could fulfil many of the aims of the *fin-de-siècle* Scottish movement: unlike many other forms of cultural memory, they could visualise lines of mythical and historical descent and could (if managed successfully) disrupt the narrative of stadialism. Public spectacles had been used throughout the nineteenth century to define collective identities (such as the Burns Festival of 1844) but several details distinguished pageantry; most pertinently: the processional form of late nineteenth-century pageants helped trace lines of descent, often back to myths of origin, which helped cultural nationalists disseminate and activate narratives of national continuity to wider audiences. One of the most popular myths communicated in the Scottish pageants was the Arthurian myth, which will be dealt with in detail in this chapter. This myth and its treatment epitomised the nature of Scottish cultural nationalism's desire both to reclaim aspects of Scottish culture that were felt to be lost by state and cultural centralisation but also allowed Scotland to share a mythic vocabulary with England and Wales, but not fully divorce itself from Britain. The Arthurian legend was one of the features that distinguished Scottish pageants from ones in Ireland.

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<sup>5</sup> Clare A. P. Willsdon, *Mural Painting in Britain 1840-1940: Image and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Trudy Baltz, 'Pageantry and Mural Painting: Community Rituals in Allegorical Form', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 15.3 (1980), 211-228 (p. 212).

<sup>7</sup> David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth-Century* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 120.

Pageants were also closely involved with wider civic society and with alternative models of education which could support civic nationalism, as will be demonstrated with Geddes. Studies on pageantry in Britain have largely overlooked the existence of Scottish pageants or,<sup>8</sup> if they are noted, their distinctiveness, both in terms of style and ideas.

These pageants did not always sit well with Decadence. The collaborative, public nature of the pageants distinguished them from what Geddes saw as the detached nature of the Decadent, discussed in Chapter 3. Despite this public link, some ties to Decadence remained, and there were certainly links to *fin-de-siècle* styles and ideas more widely. This chapter's discussions on the aims of many pageants to return to origins, express legends and demonstrate their working on in contemporary life is consistent with the Baudelarian notion of Decadence outlined in chapter 2 – one that critiques narratives of improvement. In *The Birth and Growth of Art* masque, performed at the Glasgow School of Art in 1909 following the completion of the building, the God Pan narrates and explicitly invokes Aesthetic and Decadent ideas, by expressing his opposition to 'huddled civilisation' that drives people from nature and hails 'the reborn Art, for Her own sake'.<sup>9</sup> Pageants also used a processional form that may well have been inspired by the Aesthetes. Furthermore, aesthetic decoration was key to many Scottish pageants; unlike pageants elsewhere which tended to involve basic costumes,<sup>10</sup> several of the Scottish pageants included work from the finest artists in Scotland, including Duncan and King. Similarly, Geddes was keen to encourage the Scots to be more theatrical, and appreciative of the theatre, which he believed they found 'scarcely serious as compared with Church and State', through pageants.<sup>11</sup> This desire is evident in the design for the back cover of *The Masque of Ancient Learning* book (Figure 5.1): the Outlook Tower is represented with a Muse, whose dress is made of scrolls, with Janus masks flying behind her: there was a clear

<sup>8</sup> For instance, see Roger Simpson, 'Arthurian Pageants in Twentieth-Century Britain', *Arthuriana*, 18.1 (2008), 63-87.

<sup>9</sup> Fra Newbery, *The Birth and Growth of Art: A Symbolistic Masque in Five Ages and an Allegory*, Pamphlet (1909), pp. 4, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Baltz, 211-212.

<sup>11</sup> Papers and Notes relating to Masques of Learning, c.1912-1914 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/174].

attempt to elevate the status of the aesthetic and performance. Although the pageants were more engaged with mass culture and mass participation than occultism, paganism and orientalism, Aestheticism and Decadence did inform Scottish pageantry.



Figure 5.1: Back cover, *The Masque of Ancient Learning*, 1913

I will argue that the popular pageants in Scotland collectively memorialised myths of descent in order to nurture a national 'sense of continuity'. The chapter will begin by outlining the relationship of pageantry and myths of descent to theories of cultural memory and cultural nationalism. I will then demonstrate the form that pageantry took in Scotland, within the context of those in the British Isles, noting its particularly national character and focussing on the *National Exhibition Pageant* held in Edinburgh (1908). From here, I focus on one of the key myths of descent represented in Scottish pageantry (the Scottish Arthurian myth) and argue that it supported the particular nature of national pageantry in Scotland. Finally, the role of pageantry in civic Scotland will be discussed, with particular attention given to its ability to support an alternative form of education. Here, I compare the Scottish pageants to those that were produced in Ireland that similarly traced Celtic myths of descent and served an

educational purpose but often in a very different manner to those in Scotland – building on discussions in Chapter 3.

'Allegory, History and Myth' primarily engages with first research question of this thesis, on how greatly the Scots Renaissance was defined by its context, by showing how the public presentation of particular myths of descent in Scotland reflected the nation's particular socio-political circumstances. Furthermore, while pageants elsewhere could confirm stadialist narratives, these pageants in Scotland tended to subvert them. What is also most apparent in this chapter is the great amount of collaboration that occurred across Scotland in this period, which speaks to the third research question. The ties between pageantry and Decadence, discussed above, are also developed on thus addressing the second research question.

## **5.2 Cultural Memory and Pageantry**

The *fin-de-siècle* pageants that emerged in Scotland can be considered examples of cultural memory, of disseminating and creating shared memories publicly through spectacle. In order to understand their status in terms of cultural memory, I examine the development of cultural memory in the long nineteenth century, when new views regarding public spectacle and history were being shaped. This section of the chapter considers the various forms of cultural memory that developed over the nineteenth century, how they have been theorised and details what distinguished pageants from other similar events or memorials.

Following the emergence and growth of antiquarianism in the eighteenth century,<sup>12</sup> resulting in the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1717 and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1780 as well as the foundation of such institutions as the British Museum in 1759, a keen interest in the past had developed by the end of the eighteenth century, and the past was increasingly being used to make sense of the

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<sup>12</sup> For a longer discussion on eighteenth-century antiquaries, see Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon & London, 2004).



present. With Walter Scott's establishment of the historical novel tradition, which complemented the 'emergence of historical scholarship',<sup>13</sup> looking back to the past was not only made possible to a far larger demographic but it was being encouraged more widely.

This emerging wider concern with history is reflected in nineteenth-century public festivals, ceremonies and monuments which were principally concerned with looking to the past and commemorating it. Roland Quinault has noted that 'in modern Europe centenary commemorations were rare before 1800 and uncommon before the mid-nineteenth century. Thereafter, however, the number and scope of centenary commemorations grew rapidly and by the late nineteenth century, a "cult of the centenary" had become established'.<sup>14</sup> In the United Kingdom, these began with the Handel and Burns centenaries held in the Crystal Palace in 1859 and 'Ballantine's chronicle records a mind-boggling total of 876 celebratory events' for Burns that year.<sup>15</sup> Quinault argues that 'the contemporary emergence of History as a distinct academic discipline and the growth of learned historical societies and journals stimulated the growth of centenaries',<sup>16</sup> along with 'local patriotism and commercial interest'.<sup>17</sup> Or, as Aleida Assmann puts it, centenaries were part of creating 'common traditions in order to create an identity for the new political subject "the people"'.<sup>18</sup>

Various other forms of public spectacle became common in the nineteenth century. For instance, the Eglinton Tournament of 1839, which revived the earlier jousting tournaments, and the Queen's costume ball of 1842 were ways of celebrating Medievalism, that involved the 'wearing of costumes that represented medieval clothing'<sup>19</sup> by drawing on the Victorians' 'antiquarian study' and,<sup>20</sup> for the Eglinton Tournament, the jousting event from Scott's *Ivanhoe*. There were also

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<sup>13</sup> Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Roland Quinault, 'The Cult of the Centenary c.1784-1914', *Historical Research*, 71 (1998), 303-23 (303).

<sup>15</sup> Ann Rigney, 'Embodied Communities: Commemorating Robert Burns, 1859', *Representations*, 115 (2011), 71-101 (p. 71).

<sup>16</sup> Quinault, 321.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>18</sup> p. 129.

<sup>19</sup> Helene E. Roberts, 'Victorian Medievalism: Revival or Masquerade', *Browning Institute Studies*, 8 (1980), 11-44 (p. 11)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

commemorations of national cultural figures as part of local festivals, including Burns at the Ayr Festival of 1844,<sup>21</sup> and of historical events, of which the Culloden Memorial in 1881 is an example. Towards the end of the long nineteenth century, the Bannockburn Day demonstration in 1901 can also be placed in this context, with Theodore Napier in his 'customary pre-Revolution Highland dress',<sup>22</sup> celebrating a past era through public procession and costume. The nineteenth century was a period when public spectacle became a vehicle for understanding, engaging with and appropriating history.

In this respect, nineteenth-century public commemorations were forms of cultural memory. For Ann Rigney, memory 'refers in the first instance to the ways in which individuals recall their own experience, and as such it cannot be automatically or easily transferred to the social domain'.<sup>23</sup> However, she goes on to map out an alternative form of memory, cultural memory, 'in which images of the past are communicated and shared among members of a community through public acts of remembrance through publicly accessible media'.<sup>24</sup> Thus, cultural memory 'is always "external"'<sup>25</sup> – it is sustained through memorials, ceremonies and monuments, not personal memory. These cultural memories are not fixed and are always vicarious as they 'evolve in the course of time'<sup>26</sup> and are 'mediated by texts and images'.<sup>27</sup> Rigney also highlights that 'authenticity may not always be relevant to memorial dynamics, and certain things may be recalled because they are meaningful to those doing the recalling rather than because [...] they are actually true'.<sup>28</sup> The memories often tell us more about the community recalling too; for Rigney, 'this recovery project is itself linked in complex ways to contemporary identity politics and to the desire of particular

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<sup>21</sup> For more on this festival, see Murray Pittock and Christopher A. Whatley, 'Poems and Festivals, Art and Artefact and the Commemoration of Robert Burns, c.1844-1896', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 93.1 (2014), 56-79.

<sup>22</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, *The Invention of Scotland: The Stuart Myth and the Scottish Identity, 1638 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 130.

<sup>23</sup> Ann Rigney, 'Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans', *Poetics Today*, 25.2 (2004), 361-96 (p. 365).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>25</sup> Ann Rigney, 'Plenitude, Scarcity and the Circulation of Cultural Memory', *Journal of European Studies*, 35.1 (2005), 11-28 (25).

<sup>26</sup> 'Portable Monuments', p. 377.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381.

groups to profile their common identity by claiming distinct roots in a particular historical experience'.<sup>29</sup> It is thus a 'working memory'<sup>30</sup> that communities sustain, elaborate and alter over time. Rigney's work expands on the ideas of Ernest Renan in the late nineteenth century, who noted in 'What is a Nation?' that the will to remember is also the will to forget.<sup>31</sup> It also occupies a similar platform to Anthony Smith's notions of ethno-symbolism (discussed in Chapter 3): a selective appropriation of the past is seen as key to forming identity in both scholars' work. Cultural memory can be (and often is) an important part of forming and distributing myths of descent on a wider scale.

It is clear that the nineteenth-century public spectacles discussed above were forms of this cultural memory – they were ways of remembering the past through publicly accessible media. Furthermore, in tune with Rigney's definition of cultural memory, they often involved a community or culture attempting to form its own identity through appropriation; they embodied a new democratic history where the people could choose the histories they wanted to represent. In some instances, this could involve a conflict between prescribed 'elite' history and a chosen public history. This was articulated by Karl Sheffler in 1907 who said that monuments allowed the public to honour 'their own political and spiritual leaders'.<sup>32</sup> The French Revolutionary Festivals dramatically embodied such new forms of collaborative, public performance that celebrated chosen histories and tried to forge a communal identity. These have been discussed by Mona Ozouf, who replays Albert Mathiez's belief that 'various [Revolutionary] cults were inspired by a common determination to replace the Catholic form of worship with a new one, which could offer its adherents new satisfactions in an era of change'.<sup>33</sup> This became 'an annual and commemorative history of the

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<sup>29</sup> 'Plenitude', p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion on memory and nationhood, see Vincent J. Cheng, 'Amnesia, Forgetting, and the Nation in James Joyce's *Ulysses*', in *James Joyce and Cultural Memory*, ed. by Oona Frawley and Katherine O'Callaghan (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014) pp. 10-26 (pp. 14-15).

<sup>32</sup> (cited in) Assmann, p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> Mona Ozouf, 'Space and Time in Festivals of the French Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17.3 (1975), 372-84 (p. 375).

Revolution', according to an organiser of one of the ceremonies.<sup>34</sup> Ozouf does not believe that they were entirely historical – they were also designed 'to dull the disturbing shock, to efface the newness of the event' –<sup>35</sup> but, nevertheless, they were civic festivals that celebrated a selected period in history to strengthen a distinct collective identity.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, some felt an increasing imperative to select collective memories to prevent identities being lost, in the manner that Rigney defines. In his essay 'The Use and Abuse of History' (1874), Nietzsche notes that 'Historical knowledge streams on him [modern man] from sources that are inexhaustible'.<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche finds the growing pool of historical knowledge a problem: 'by excess of history life becomes maimed and degenerate' (p. 16). He proposes that a limited and focused engagement with the past is needed to style the future and identity: 'cheerfulness, a good conscience, belief in the future, the joyful deed, all depend, in the individual as well as the nation, on there being a line that divides the visible and the clear from the vague and the shadowy: we must know the right time to forget as well as the right time to remember' (p. 10). To continually remember denies focus and clarity to an identity and ultimately destroys it: 'there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of "historical sense", that injures and finally destroys the living thing, be it a man or a people or a system of culture' (p. 9). As Aleida Assmann notes, there was a feeling that 'knowledge of the past had become increasingly functionless in relation to future orientation'.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Geddes stated that 'tradition is truer than history': the historical alone was losing its significance.<sup>39</sup> A selected memory, a cultural memory, was increasingly needed to sustain communities by the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>34</sup> (cited in) *Ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>36</sup> In many respects, this dates back to Comte who created the cult of the secular hero by drawing up his positivist calendar of 558 people which was intended 'as a substitute for the saints of the catholic calendar'; see Quinault, pp. 305-306.

<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thoughts out of Season*, trans by. Adrian Collins, 2 vols (London: George Allen & Unwin, c.1910), II, p. 31 [future references to this edition are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>38</sup> Assman, p. 120.

<sup>39</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Celtic Races', 1896 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/8].

It is from this context, where a far greater stress was been placed on memory and celebrating a selected history to strengthen cultural identities, that *fin-de-siècle* pageants and masques emerged. In part, they were a continuation of the tradition of festivals and spectacles but there was a shift. These were festivals that reflected a culture that was developing a greater enthusiasm for ritualistic processions – several Aesthetes were particularly interested in processions via their enthusiasm for antiquity, most clearly revealed in Alma-Tadema's and Frederic Leighton's panoramic paintings.<sup>40</sup> Beyond this, these public processions offered the opportunity to present lines of historical and mythological descent, which would have appealed to a post-Darwinian world that was fascinated by defining lineage. Pageants also responded to the advent of cinema and motion studies that, like pageants, presented moving pictures.<sup>41</sup> Although *fin-de-siècle* pageants were part of a longer tradition of creating public memory through spectacle, they were very much of their time.

These *fin-de-siècle* masques and pageants were considered distinctive from those performed in the Medieval and Early Modern eras;<sup>42</sup> one contemporary reviewer noted that they were now 'more consciously historical' and appealed to 'local patriotism',<sup>43</sup> which attests that the new form of pageantry, in line with the developments in nineteenth-century spectacle, was used to construct a common local identity through 'consciously' choosing a history. Like other spectacles, they could also be more democratic; a community – whether local, national or institutional – could express the history that community wanted to tell, or there was at least more dialogue between public and prescribed history. The fact that the whole community could contribute towards the pageant also made them more democratic, they were 'production[s] in which the inhabitants of the community take part'<sup>44</sup> – Louis Napoleon Parker's vision of pageants, according to Robert Withington. As with the Independent

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<sup>40</sup> For a discussion on such paintings, see Caroline Dunant, 'Olympian Dreamscapes: The Photographic Canvas: The Wide-screen Paintings of Leighton, Poynter and Alma-Tadema', in *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*, ed. by Jacky Bratton and others (London: British Film Institute, 1994), pp. 82-93.

<sup>41</sup> For more on how some pageant-masters in America were inspired by and resisted the commercialism of motion pictures, see Glassberg, p. 118.

<sup>42</sup> For more discussion on an example of earlier pageantry, Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Dorrell, 'The Doomsday Pageant of the York Mercers, 1433', *Leeds Studies in English*, 5 (1971), 29-34.

<sup>43</sup> 'The Warwick Pageant', *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 102 (1906), 12-13 (p. 12).

<sup>44</sup> Robert Withington, 'Louis Napoleon Parker', *The New England Quarterly*, 12 (1939), 510-520 (p. 512).

Order of Odd Fellows' trade parade of 1880, which included various tradesman in 'a celebration of masculine work, prosperity, and camaraderie' that promoted the institutional identity,<sup>45</sup> Parker's pageants used participants to help voice a local collective culture.

Like Rigney's definitions, Parker's pageants in England from 1905 celebrated certain aspects of the community's local history that were desirable, to shape the contemporary community identity and resist 'what was felt to be the evil consequences of industrialization such as loss of solidarity, disintegration of society and disorder'.<sup>46</sup> Parker himself defined a pageant as 'a festival of thanksgiving, in which a great city or a little hamlet celebrates its glorious past, its prosperous present, and its hopes and aspirations for the future'.<sup>47</sup> This quotation reveals that pageantry was not only a form of historical revival but involved choosing specific memories to further the local identity and pride. Pageants also functioned externally, preserving memory through the publically viewable artefacts and designs. However, they were neither the fixed nor portable monuments Rigney discusses;<sup>48</sup> they were ephemeral monuments that were only available at the time of the performance or through the photographs taken of the pageants, like those by Stanley Roberts, whose business card Geddes possessed is endorsed 'Masque Photographer'.<sup>49</sup> The pageants did not solely function as a form of cultural memory; they also served – as Parker noted – to reveal that 'talent and technical skill is lying dormant in the English provincial towns'.<sup>50</sup> However, Parker's pageants clearly sit well within the discourse of cultural memory. It was this form of cultural memory that many Scottish cultural nationalists used and participated in.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 90.

<sup>47</sup> (cited in) Withington, 514.

<sup>48</sup> 'Portable Monuments', 383.

<sup>49</sup> Business Card of Stanley Roberts [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/112].

<sup>50</sup> (cited in) 'Mr. Louis N. Parker on Pageantry', *Review of Reviews*, 33 (1906), 598-599 (p. 598).

### 5.3 *The Scottish National Exhibition Pageant (1908)*

Scottish cultural nationalists were clearly interested in public spectacles and monuments and their capability to develop a collective memory; for instance, Geddes applauded the Wallace Monument for reactivating 'our long Celtic memory' –<sup>51</sup> a pertinent statement considering it characterises the national hero as Celtic, complementing Geddes's several attempts to associate a unified Scotland with Celtic culture, which was less incorporated into Britain. It is unsurprising that Scottish cultural nationalists were also enthusiastic about pageants. Through the processional nature of the pageant, ancestral identities and lines of continuity could be best expressed, revealing the hidden self and doing so to mass audiences and with mass participation.

There is evidence to suggest that pageants were being developed in Scotland before Parker, despite his claim that he invented the new pageants.<sup>52</sup> Geddes is believed to have been producing masques during 1890s and,<sup>53</sup> amongst the Papers of Patrick Geddes, there is a letter to Geddes from Withington requesting information on a pageant he organised on Arthur's Seat in 1900.<sup>54</sup> The members of the Glasgow School and various other figures associated with the Scottish movement were also active in producing pageants in the period; the *Masque of the City Arms* in Glasgow (1903) precedes Parker's pageants too.

Geddes believed masques and pageants were central to the development of cultural nationalism, which he expressed in his unpublished essay 'Significance and Purpose of the Masques': he believed that the 'railways age and its centralising influences' had 'pushed back the whole romantic movement until even Scottish folk songs or the German art-songs to which they gave impulse' were little more than

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<sup>51</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Celtic Renaissance – Columbian and Contemporary', p. 6 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/6].

<sup>52</sup> (cited in) 'Mr Louis N Parker', *Review of Reviews*, 598; in fact, there is evidence of similar pageants being held as early as the 1880s, such as the *Grand Pageant at Ripon Yorkshire* (1886).

<sup>53</sup> Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Dublin and Edinburgh 1885-1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), p. 35.

<sup>54</sup> Letter to Patrick Geddes from Robert Withington [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 9/1194].

'culture-reminiscences'.<sup>55</sup> He believed that masques and pageants could counter this and 're-establish a common culture, civic, national and general' (p. 6): 'traditions must be recovered, new minstrels must again arise, in sympathy with their own people' (p. 4). For Geddes, pageants could 're-Muse' (p. 4) and herald the 'Mythopoetic age' – they could help rebuild collective identities, including national ones.<sup>56</sup>

When situated within the context of other nations, it becomes clear how nationally-focussed Scottish pageants were. Elizabeth Cumming has noted that the Scottish pageants 'contributed to a modern British tradition',<sup>57</sup> but it should be acknowledged that the pageants in Scotland could be very particular in subject and form. There is a very clear comparison to be made between the main Scottish and English pageants in this period. The pageants produced by Parker and others in England were intensely local, embodied by the titles of the main pageants performed: the *Sherborne Pageant* (1905); the *Warwick Pageant* (1906), the *Oxford Historical Pageant* (1907), the *Bury, St Edmunds Pageant* (1907), the *St. Albans Pageant* (1907), the *Liverpool Pageant* (1907), the *Chelsea Pageant* (1908), the *Winchester Pageant* (1908), the *Dover Pageant* (1908), the *Colchester Pageant* (1909), the *Bath Pageant* (1909), the *Chester Pageant* (1910) and *The Pageant of London – A Masque of Empire* (1911). As in America, these local pageants did not ignore the context of national history but the locality 'was the hero',<sup>58</sup> as William Chauncy Langdon, one of America's foremost pageant-masters, noted. This is in stark contrast to the main pageants produced in Scotland, some of whose titles alone reveal a particularly national character. They range from the *Mary Queen of Scots Pageant* (1906), *Scottish National Exhibition Pageant* (1908), the *Life of Robert Bruce and Robert Burns* pageants at the Scottish Exhibition, Kelvingrove Park (1911) – an exhibition which also proposed a Jacobite Pageant to be penned by Neil Munro and more widely

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<sup>55</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Significance and Purpose of the Masques', p. 6 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/395] [future references to this document are given in brackets after quotations].

<sup>56</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 91.

<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), p. 180.

<sup>58</sup> (cited in) Glassberg, pp. 69, 78.



celebrated a unified Scottish culture by representing a Highland village alongside Lowland industries,<sup>59</sup> the *Bannockburn Pageant* (1914) – which sought the talents of the Outlook Tower Masquers,<sup>60</sup> the *Masque of Scottish Women* (1926) and the *Scottish Historical Pageant* (1927). Even those that didn't include a reference to the Scottish nation in the title could be heavily centred on Scottish history, such as the *Glasgow University Pageant* (1908), which partially reprised the *National Exhibition Pageant*. Scottish pageants were strongly centred on the Scottish nation and key national figures, such as Mary Queen of Scots, Bruce and Burns. Evidently, several of these pageants played into the veneration of national heroism in Scotland in this period, where heroes were used to celebrate national identity.<sup>61</sup> This difference between the Scottish and English pageants was so stark that it was noted by Withington in 1920: he wrote that England had not had an equivalent to the 'Scotch and Welsh national pageants' because 'the small place' was prized in England and the alternatives were felt to be too 'politicized'.<sup>62</sup> In Scotland, the 'small place' alone was rarely the hero: instead, the nation was the hero.

In this respect, the Scottish pageant tradition was closer to that in Ireland and Wales, where the main pageants tended to have a national focus, such as the *National Pageant of Wales* (1909); indeed, these nations conducted a pageant together during the Celtic Congress of Caernarfon in 1904 where the members donned historical dresses to perform as various Celtic figures for an audience on the final day.<sup>63</sup> Scottish pageants were particularly close to those in Ireland. Many pageants in Ireland, especially those designed by Patrick Pearse – discussed below, were politically nationalist but several of the same myths of descent that Scottish pageant-masters pursued were disseminated in these pageants too. These comparisons are revealing as they demonstrate that cultural (and political) nationalists were particularly drawn to

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<sup>59</sup> Pernilla Kinchin and Juliet Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1880, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988* (Wendlebury: White Cockade Publishing, 1988), p. 104.

<sup>60</sup> Postcard invitation to participate in a Bannockburn Pageant at Falkirk, June 1914 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 7/8/78].

<sup>61</sup> For more information on heroism in *fin-de-siècle* Scottish art, see Murdo Macdonald, *Scottish Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 129.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), II, pp. 202-203.

<sup>63</sup> For more on this Congress and its pageant, see Marion Löffler, *A Book of Mad Celts: John Wickens and the Celtic Congress of Caernarfon 1904* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 2000).

pageantry in this period, due to its ability to develop and cement cultural memory: Geddes, for instance, believed they were 'the most ambitious and comprehensive' activities he and the members of Outlook Tower were engaged in.<sup>64</sup>

The narrative of these pageants in Scotland was often pointedly designed to develop on and elaborate myths of descent: many traced a national history and one that was rooted in mythology. This is particularly apparent in the *Scottish National Exhibition Pageant* that was performed as part of the National Exhibition at Saughton Park, Edinburgh in 1908 which presented Scotland's history in pageant form. This pageant was designed to raise funds for the Children's League of Pity and was several years in the making, resulting in something more profound than an historical pageant. Its Executive Committee was led by Mrs. E. A. Walton and included John Duncan, James Paterson and the Traquairs; there were also five sub-committees for the Allegorical, Celtic, Historical and Arthurian groups and the closing Masque. The pageant was staged twice on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1908, involving nearly 1800 players, and was described as 'simply enormous'.<sup>65</sup> Some short pieces of footage documenting the pageant are publicly available, via Scottish Screen Archive.<sup>66</sup>



Figure 5.2: The Early Church section, *National Exhibition Pageant*, Saughton Park, 1908. (Courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library: RMA-S544[Y])

<sup>64</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Significance and Purpose of the Masques', pp. 7-8. [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/395].

<sup>65</sup> 'The Pageant and Masque', *The Scotsman*, 11 June 1908, p. 7.

<sup>66</sup> Scottish National Exhibition, Scottish Screen Archive <<http://ssa.nls.uk/film/1699>> [accessed 12 June 2014].



Figures 5.3 and 5.4: [Left] Cuchullin, *National Exhibition Pageant*, Saughton Park, 1908 (Private Collection); [Right] Fionn, *National Exhibition Pageant*, Saughton Park, 1908 (Private Collection)

The pageant integrated Celtic, Arthurian and various other myths into the procession of Scotland's history. It was very much a memory, a myth of descent, that was developed in the pageant, not simply a historical or allegorical presentation. It included a pre-historical and a historical section and the episodes for the latter part of the plan were partially decided by the public, through a competition won by C. A. Malcolm in *The Scottish Review*.<sup>67</sup> The 'pre-historical' part of the pageant was divided into three sections: Celtic, Arthurian (which will be developed below) and Early Church which presented various styles of crosses (Figure 5.2), perhaps attempting to provide a more unified image of Scottish religion to bind the various sects that existed in the period. These were organised and designed by John Duncan, Jessie M King and Phoebe Traquair respectively, in collaboration with others. Duncan and King even performed in the pageant: Duncan as Cormac and King as the Angel of the Holy Graal.

<sup>67</sup> Geddes possessed this issue; see 'Journal: *The Scottish Review*. Vol V. No. 112' [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/2/192].

These parts of the pageant, from what we can gather, celebrate a mythic, heroic past: heroic figures present in the Ramsay Garden mural scheme appear here: notably, Cuchullin (Figure 5.3) and Fionn, played by James Cadenhead (Figure 5.4). Scots Pharoah also makes an appearance in the Celtic section, whose links to Scottish myths of origin are discussed in Chapter 4. The pageant attempts to link Scottish history to its mythology, to trace the nation's lines of continuity back to their origins and bind the people together through a shared past – it activates the hidden ancestral self.

Another feature of the Scottish pageants that was national was that they involved a wide scope of collaborators. It is remarkable just how much interaction is evident in the *National Pageant*: it is not limited to Edinburgh artists but includes the Glasgow School (Arthurian section) and work from various others. While pageants elsewhere tended to be produced by, and involve the participation of, the local community, in this pageant in particular it was far more national. Several of the designers participated in the pageant too: alongside Traquair, Duncan and King were Margaret Macdonald as Morgan le Fay and E. A. Taylor as Sir Galahad, while Geddes performed in numerous roles in his own pageants (Figure 5.5). The fact that they appeared in the processions along with the numerous other actors demonstrates how little sense of elitism there was: the celebrated artists could create pageant costumes and perform in them alongside the general public.

The pageant's visual sophistication was partly ensured by including work by so many renowned artists, several of whom were mural painters. The costumes for the historical part of the *National Exhibition Pageant* were designed by William Hole who provides a good example of the overlap between mural painting and pageants.<sup>68</sup> His frieze for the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (c.1898) is itself a (male-centric) processional pageant of notable Scottish figures, while his murals for the entrance hall of the gallery detail key scenes from Scotland's past, including 'The Mission of St Columba to the Picts' (1898). To have Hole, as well as King and Duncan, to name a few, contribute costumes demonstrates how significant this national pageant was and

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<sup>68</sup> William Hole, Costumes designed for the Scottish Historical Pageant held in Edinburgh on 13th June 1908 (design sketches, 1908).

also how much stress was placed on craft. The pageant embodies Geddes's belief that 'neither head, hand nor heart may be lacking' in masques,<sup>69</sup> an allusion to the Arts and Crafts idea that practicality, labour and beauty must be intertwined. The pageant's splendour also reflects Geddes's belief that 'Celtic' art is more 'democratic', concerned with public magnificence, than the 'capitalistic' private magnificence that is preferred amongst the artists of South Kensington.<sup>70</sup> The *National Exhibition Pageant* was a celebration of Scottish art as much as its national history and origins.



Figure 5.5: Patrick Geddes as Medieval Scholar [?], *The Masque of Ancient Learning*, 1912 (Archive Services and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/4/8)

Geddes may well have been involved in some way in the planning of the *National Exhibition Pageant*: he wrote to the organising committee proposing 'arrangements' to the Exhibition's Provisional Committee but we cannot be sure

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<sup>69</sup> 'Significance and Purpose of the Masques', p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Patrick Geddes, untitled essay on the Celtic Cross, pp. 6-9 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/13].

exactly what these entailed,<sup>71</sup> although they do appear to have involved pageantry.<sup>72</sup> He was certainly aware of the pageant: he complemented the Arthurian section, which will be illustrated below, and his three children participated in the Celtic section (Norah as a daughter of Maeve, Alastair as one of the Riders of the Sidhe and Arthur as Fionn's Fairy Harper). His wife, Anna, was also involved in organising costumes for the Celtic Kings.<sup>73</sup> It would not be surprising if he was involved: the pageant's attempt to integrate history and myth in styling a line of descent for Scotland is highly in tune with Geddes's activities in this period.

Although the *National Exhibition Pageant* supported the desire to widely disseminate myths of descent, one feature of pageantry that threatened to disrupt Scottish cultural nationalism was the kinship between pageants and stadialist narratives. Such processions could play well into the presentation of society moving through various stages on a teleological trajectory. In his study *American Historical Pageantry*, David Glassberg demonstrates how pageants of the 1910s often represented an orderly narrative from primitivism towards civilisation, evidenced in the design for the pageant programme of the Boston Pageant, entitled *Cave Life to City Life* which presents a primitive man looking out to modern industrial society (including airplanes) on the horizon (Figure 5.6). Glassberg notes the tendency towards representation of 'successive stages of community development' which depicted 'orderly, stable progress' in America in this period.<sup>74</sup> The idea of 'community destiny' was developed here to such a degree that some represented the "'historical inevitability" of white conquest'.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Letters from Fraser Dobie to Patrick Geddes, d.1905-1906 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 7/1/14/1].

<sup>72</sup> Geddes mentions pageantry in a letter to Bailie Fraser Dobie, after being advised to contact Dobie by a W. B. Blaikie, a member of the Exhibition Committee; see Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 7/1/14/2 and 7/1/13.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Daisy to Mrs Geddes, 30 May 1908 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 9/840].

<sup>74</sup> Glassberg, p. 139.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143; it should be acknowledged that American pageants were not always stadialist: pageants in this period could look to the past to provide 'a guide to proper behaviour in the present' (Glassberg, p. 124).

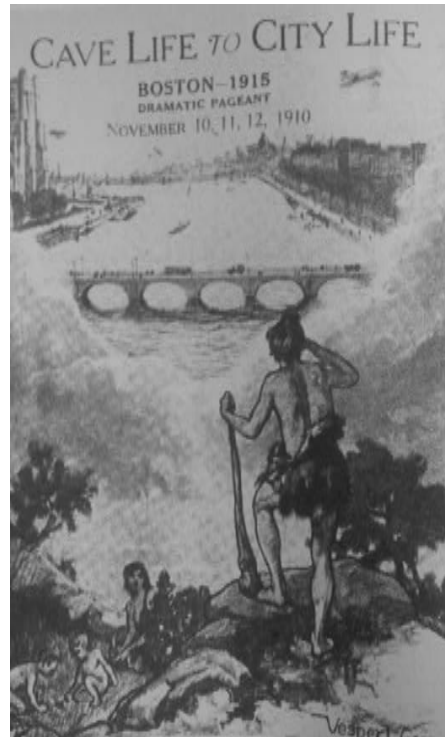


Figure 5.6: Art in the pageant programme for *Cave Life to City Life*, Boston, 1910<sup>76</sup>

Despite the appropriateness of pageants for representing stadialist narratives, Scottish national pageants tended not to focus on a teleological development but looked back to an imagined past. The national pageants almost entirely fail to represent industrialism or Scotland's innovations; the *National Exhibition Pageant* concluded at the defeat of the Jacobites and ignores the Act of Union (1707) – the culture associated with 'improvement' is largely neglected. Unlike in America, the past was felt to be a far greater tool for creating a collective community than celebrating a collective destiny. The ideas evoked in this and other Scottish pageants encouraged the audience to look back, or recognise the past in the present, not to move away from it. For instance, in *The Birth and Growth of Art* masque, Pan celebrates the fact that 'primeval senses wake from hidden depths'.<sup>77</sup> This is the main concern in Geddes's book *Dramatisations of History*, written to accompany his pageant on education, *The Masque of Ancient Learning*, which will be discussed in greater depth in the final section of the chapter. Typical of Geddes, there is a desire to distance

<sup>76</sup> For more on this pageant and other more stadialist ones in America, see Glassberg pp. 104-156.

<sup>77</sup> *The Birth and Growth of Art*, p. 5.

himself from straightforward stadial narratives. He writes that 'history is no mere retrospect of the past, nor excavation in it: what it reveals to us, above all, is the past working on within our apparent present'.<sup>78</sup> He also mentions the 'undying past' while,<sup>79</sup> when discussing the primitive in an unpublished paper on the masque, he states that 'our pageant thus recapitulates this past more and more fully, age by age; in each phase, as far as may be, with some suggestion of its return to Nature, and for its fresh impulse of development'.<sup>80</sup> Geddes gives 'the Celtic world' its due here: these places best show and embrace the preservation of the past and, because of this, they should go 'forth to civilize their conquerors', an expression which again subverts stadialist narratives.<sup>81</sup> Geddes's views chime with Jung's collective unconscious theory which posits that there are 'memories that all human beings possess',<sup>82</sup> and those of Herbert Spencer (one Geddes admired) who – according to Oscar Wilde – believed in 'the *hereditary transmission of concepts*'.<sup>83</sup> Although Geddes's ideas on memory are more engaged with what Elizabeth Sharp called a 'spiritual heritage'<sup>84</sup> than genetic ties, the concept that memories can be passed through a race is common. It is also no surprise that Geddes became interested in the theories of Henri Bergson around this time as Bergson's ideas of fluid time permitted non-stadialist understandings of evolution; a Bergson Symposium was even held at the Outlook Tower and Geddes believed that it was only 'through Scottish reviewers that England came to think of Bergson'.<sup>85</sup> Pageants in Scotland carefully avoided, even subverted, the presentation of stadialist narratives which the form could so easily support.

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<sup>78</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. iv.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>80</sup> Papers by Patrick Geddes regarding Masques of Learning [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/397].

<sup>81</sup> *Dramatisations*, pp. x-xi.

<sup>82</sup> 'Carl Gustav Jung', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 988.

<sup>83</sup> *Oscar Wilde's Oxford Notebooks*, ed. by Philip E. Smith and Michael S. Helfand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.120.

<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod): A Memoir* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), p. 249.

<sup>85</sup> Programme for a Bergson Symposium [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 7/8/44]; Letter from Patrick Geddes to R. E. Muirhead, 4 December 1928 [Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh: E2208.54].



Although pageants in Scotland clearly focussed on nationalism, they still held a civic importance. Geddes described pageants as the 'sociological and civic stage',<sup>86</sup> while Victor Branford, who co-founded the Sociological Society with Geddes in 1903, explains this concept of a civic stage in more detail:

No city-plan is adequate to future requirements which fails to find a place for the Civic Theatre, and for one designed on large and generous proportions – a spacious portico for pageant, masque and processional.<sup>87</sup>

Pageants had a national role in Scotland but they also had a civic one. Geddes's *Masque of Learning* is testament to this, evident in its celebration of Edinburgh. However, Edinburgh's status as the nation's capital cannot be ignored: being the nation's capital, Edinburgh could symbolise Scotland. This is apparent in the *National Exhibition Pageant* with its 'Allegory of the City of Edinburgh' which preceded the pageant as the civic allegory had a national slant: Edinburgh was styled as the 'Queen City of the Realm of Scotland' who was supported by 'All the Burghs of Scotland':<sup>88</sup> it may have been local but, like the *Bannockburn Pageant*, the locality was strongly associated with the nation.

## 5.4 Arthurian Scotland

Besides the pagan Celtic myths of descent that were pursued in the Scottish pageants, there was another particularly striking one which was developed in several: the Scottish Arthurian myth. John Morrison argues that Duncan's and Geddes's use of Arthur, in the Ramsay Gardens murals (Figure 3.2), embodies British Unionism: he reads the mural of Arthur as an example of inspiration from an 'English source' and concludes that they are 'inclusively British', not an example of 'narrow nationalism'.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. iv.

<sup>87</sup> (cited in) 'The Civic Theatre', *Review of Reviews*, 48 (1913), p. 445.

<sup>88</sup> *Scottish Children's League of Pity Pageant Handbook, 1908*, Pamphlet (1908), pp. 3-4.

<sup>89</sup> John Morrison, 'Nationalism and Nationhood: Late-Nineteenth-Century Painting in Scotland', in *Art, Culture and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, ed. by Michelle Facos and Sharon L. Hirsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 186-206 (pp. 201-204).

This section of the chapter argues that Morrison's argument is misleading. In Geddes's writing on Arthur and in the various pageants that featured Arthur in Scottish history, it is clear that while the use of the Arthurian myth did suggest that Scottish cultural nationalists were happy to use a myth that was shared across Britain, they nevertheless reclaimed Arthur as a Scottish image, challenging the inherited imaginary of him as 'English' or Cornish or Welsh – it was not an image without resistance for these cultural nationalists. This aspect of *fin-de-siècle* Scotland reveals the particular nature of Scottish cultural nationalism in the period: wanting to distinguish Scotland from, but maintain ties to, Britain. It was important for Scottish cultural nationalists to disseminate this idea and not purely follow the Irish path.

From the 1860s, there was an increasing interest in pursuing both the historical and mythical roots of Arthur in Scotland, an interest that is reviving today through Adam Ardrey's books *Finding Merlin* (2007) and *Finding Arthur* (2013). J. S. Stuart Glennie was perhaps the main pioneer and his book *Arthurian Localities* (1869) makes the claim for a northern Arthur. Glennie was keen to demonstrate that the Welsh and Southern English claims to Arthur did not stack up and instead argued – by analysing topography and history – that Cymric, pre-Medieval Southern Scotland (including what is currently the north of England) offered the true origins of Arthur.<sup>90</sup> His claims tried to validate and give a context to the Arthurian aspects of Scottish folk tradition, including Arthur's Round Table below Stirling Castle and the burials of Merlin and Guinevere in Scotland.<sup>91</sup> He also contrasted the various references to Arthur in Southern and Eastern Scottish topography to the references to the Fingalian tradition in the West and North, including the many Dun Fions.<sup>92</sup> Although Glennie does portray the Highlands and Lowlands as different, they are not so different in his mind: they are united by a Celtic heritage, which disrupted many stadialist representations of the divide discussed in Chapter 1. He concludes that Scotland was composed of two main cultures: Pictish Celts and Cymric Celts, traditions that were similar enough

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<sup>90</sup> John S. Stuart Glennie, *Arthurian Localities; Their Historical Origin, Chief Country, and Fingalian Relations; with a map of Arthurian Scotland* (Edinburgh: Hertford, 1869), p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> For more on the burials of Arthurian figures in Scotland, see Jennifer Westwood, and Sophia Kingshill, *The Lore of Scotland: A Guide to Scottish Legends* (London: Random House Books, 2009), p. 216.

<sup>92</sup> Glennie, *Arthurian Localities*, pp. 101-102.

to develop a united Scottish nationality.<sup>93</sup> The fact that Glennie supported Home Rule All Round is interesting as he portrays Arthur as both a figure who can unite Scotland but also play into a wider Celtic Britain.<sup>94</sup>

Geddes was particularly keen to (re)claim the historical and mythical Arthur for Scotland and appears to have been an enthusiast of Glennie's work. Geddes planned to re-publish Glennie's *Arthurian Localities* as part of the Celtic Library (evident in the catalogue that accompanies Ernst Rhys's *The Fiddler of Carne*).<sup>95</sup> Geddes also corresponded with him: Glennie was to give two lectures at the Outlook Tower, the first on The Localities of the Arthurian Tradition, the second on The Characters of Arthurian Romance.<sup>96</sup> Geddes's interest in Arthurian Scotland is reflected throughout his work: particularly in his commentary to Duncan's mural 'The Taking of Excalibur' for Ramsay Lodge. In the guide to the murals, produced by Patrick Geddes & Colleagues, a Scottish locality is given to the Excalibur myth:

Upon the slopes of a hill now called Arthur's Seat the king would build a mighty fortress; but all the efforts of the builders were in vain [...] Merlin instructed the king to dig deep under the foundations, saying that in a subterranean cave two great serpents lay imprisoned, sleeping by day, but in the night time waking to battle with each other. The king caused the hillside to be opened, and two huge dragons [...] soared into the air biting and tearing at each other [...] Merlin, calling to those who had come to see this wonder, said that on the morrow the red dragon would rise from the loch (now below Duddingston) in the form of a sword, and to him who had the hardihood to grasp it, the sword would be yielded.<sup>97</sup>

The murals aimed to develop a myth that certified the understanding of Arthur's Seat as an Arthurian inheritance. Throughout *The Evergreen*, Geddes makes references to Arthur and Merlin. Geddes draws on Glennie's idea that 'Arthur and all his court are said to lie in enchanted sleep' underneath the Eildon Hills,<sup>98</sup> in 'The Scots Renaissance'

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>94</sup> John S. Stuart-Glennie, *The Liberal Party: its true character: betrayals of the workers: and deserved extinguishment*, Pamphlet (1895), p. 36.

<sup>95</sup> Ernst Rhys, *The Fiddler of Carne: A North Sea Winter's Tale* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes & Colleagues, 1896), p. 358.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from J. S. S. Glennie to Patrick Geddes, 24 May 1901 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 9/343].

<sup>97</sup> Patrick Geddes and others, *Interpretation of the Pictures in the Common Room of Ramsay Lodge* (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, 1928), p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> Glennie, *Arthurian Localities*, p. 66.

which was discussed in Chapter 3; the image also appears in Stephen's *The Cruciform Mark*.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, Geddes believed that the 'Celtic art stream' had been dormant since the time of King Arthur and was only now reviving.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, in 'The Scots Renaissance' Geddes imagines the Arthurian myth as the new nexus of Scottish nationality, moving away from a common identification with Jacobite romance, as was discussed in Chapter 4. For Geddes, the medieval and pre-medieval figures can provide a less combative myth to ground Scottish nationality. Beyond this, there are several other references to Merlin and Arthur in *The Evergreen*: for instance, when Geddes references Aesthetes and Decadents in 'The Sociology of Autumn' he equates them with Merlin: 'Our new Merlins thus brighten our winter with their gardens of dream'.<sup>101</sup> Merlin is a figure who, like the Decadents, can stand outside of contemporary society and imagine it anew, much like Geddes himself; indeed, he performed as Merlin in the Celtic section of *The Masque of Ancient Learning* in 1912 (Figure 5.7).<sup>102</sup> It also comes as no surprise that Geddes's youngest son was named Arthur (b.1895). The fact that Geddes was so keen to make Scotland's claim on the Arthurian myth and weave together the Fingalian and Arthurian tradition sits well in the context of Glennie's work: the two sought a remedy to a divided Victorian Scotland and that was found in a common (if diverse) Celtic past and questioned the inherited imaginary of Arthur as either English, Welsh or Cornish – reclaiming an aspect of Scottish cultural heritage.

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<sup>99</sup> Riccardo Stephens, *The Cruciform Mark* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1896), p. 308.

<sup>100</sup> Diagram by Patrick Geddes illustrating the Celtic art stream from the Classic art stream [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/5].

<sup>101</sup> 'The Sociology of Autumn', p. 36.

<sup>102</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 51.



Figure 5.7: Geddes as Merlin, *The Masque of Ancient Learning*, 1912 (Archive Services and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 22/3/36.5)

Other figures besides Geddes shared this interest in Arthurian Scotland. Duncan painted *Merlin and the Fairy Queen*, Edith Rinder contributed her rendering of the Breton legend 'Sant Eflamm and King Arthur' to the Winter issue of *The Evergreen* and, as was noted in Chapter 3, Sharp described Arthur as the defender of the Celts and he was interested in the quest for the grail, in his work as well as his life – for example, *The Gipsy Christ* (1895) traces the line of Kundry. Merlin is also the subject of Fiona's poem 'The Last Fay' and he was planning both 'Merlin: A Romance' and 'The Saga of Merlin', according to the Sharp manuscripts held in the National Library of Scotland. The plan for the latter follows the ideas of Glennie and Geddes in some respects: the Arthurian cycle emerges from the end of the Fion cycle and he plans to cover Arthur and Guinevere (or Guenevêre) in Scotland, as well as Merlin's relationship with Oisín.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, the Glasgow School of Art held an evening of tableau vivants titled 'Idylls of the King', rooted in Arthurian lore in 1909, and Phoebe Traquair produced a triptych *The Passing of Arthur* (1905), a subject that is influenced by Burne-Jones's *The Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon* (1881). It is unsurprising that

<sup>103</sup> William Sharp, manuscripts and typescripts [National Library of Scotland: MS 8777].

the figures of Arthur and Merlin appealed to the Celtic Revivalists: after all, Arthur resisted the Saxons which played well into the Scottish Celtic Revivalists' desire to create a pan-Scottish Celticism. Incidentally, Geddes also pursued this end with the figure of Columba in *The Masque of Ancient Learning* by following the pageant with a procession alongside a proposed statue for Columba. There was a renewed interest in Columba and Iona more widely in this period, reflected in Branford's book *St Columba* (1912), which was partly a result of the centenary of his death in 1897 but also on account of the desire to re-orient Scotland towards Ireland and Celticism. For Geddes, Columba was (like Arthur) a unifying, Celtic figure for Scotland, and there may even have been political undertones to the proposed statue: Geddes kept a cutting of an article in *The Scotsman* which described Columba as Scotland's first Home Ruler, liberating the Scots from foreign control.<sup>104</sup>



Figure 5.8: The Angel of the Graal and Sir Galahad, *National Exhibition Pageant*, 1908 (Private Collection)

<sup>104</sup> 'The First Home Rule Act for Scotland: our political debt to St Columba', *The Scotsman*, 18 September 1897, p. 8; this cutting can be found in the Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 4/2/13.



Figure 5.9: Queen Guinevere, *Glasgow University Pageant*, 1908 (© University of Glasgow Archive Services, Papers of Robert Herbert Story, GB0248 DC21/316. Licensors [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk))



Figure 5.10: King Arthur and His Knights, *Glasgow University Pageant*, 1908 (© University of Glasgow Archive Services, Papers of Robert Herbert Story, GB0248 DC21/316. Licensors [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk))



Figure 5.11: King Arthur, *Glasgow University Pageant*, design by Jessie M King, 1908 (Archives and Collections, Glasgow School of Art: GSAA/PI/1160-1161)



Figures 5.12 and 5.13: Sir Galahad [left] and Sir Mordred [right], *Glasgow University Pageant*, designs by Jessie M King, 1908 (Archives and Collections, Glasgow School of Art: GSAA/PI/1160-1161)



This interest in the Arthurian tradition amongst those associated with the Scottish movement is reflected in the pageants of the period, particularly the most national ones. The *National Exhibition Pageant* included a large Arthurian section which was designed by figures associated with the Glasgow School, namely Jessie M King, following her illustrations for *The High History of the Holy Graal* in 1903, who also performed in the section (Figure 5.8). These designs were admired by Geddes, who said that it 'was probably the masterpiece of pageantry as yet produced either side of the Tweed'.<sup>105</sup> They were also applauded by reviewers for their Symbolism: one described the section as being less an 'embodiment of history' and more 'the symbolic representation of the spirit of Romance'.<sup>106</sup> This Arthurian section then reappeared at the Glasgow University pageant (Figures 5.9-5.13), which also included the Arthurian myth in its representation of Scottish history. Furthermore, as has been mentioned, Arthur and Merlin appeared in Geddes's *The Masque of Ancient Learning*. In the book accompanying the masque, Geddes asks us to think back to Duncan's Ramsay Lodge murals to understand the Arthurian context:<sup>107</sup> again, he wants us to see the Arthurian tradition alongside Scotland's Fingalian and Ossianic traditions and consider Arthur as part of a Scottish collection of symbols. These various examples show that there was a clear attempt in the period to integrate the Arthurian myth into narratives of Scottish history and myths of descent and that pageantry became a key tool in weaving the Arthurian myth into the Celtic Revival and distributing it to a wider populace.

Despite the fact that Arthur did play into narratives of cultural nationalism in Scotland, there is an element of accuracy to Morrison's argument: by opting to incorporate Arthur into Scotland's myth of descent, cultural nationalists were opting to share myths of origin with other parts of Britain. One of the key features that distinguish Scotland's myths of descent from Ireland's is that the Irish rarely integrated an Arthurian narrative. Patrick Pearse even imagined the Cuchullin Cycle

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<sup>105</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 54.

<sup>106</sup> 'The Pageant and Masque', *The Scotsman*, 11 June 1908, p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 54.

as the Irish alternative to the Arthurian cycle:<sup>108</sup> Arthur could not sit so easily in Ireland. However, in English and Welsh pageants, Arthur often played a prominent role, as is discussed in Roger Simpson's 'Arthurian Pageants in Twentieth-Century Britain', an article which strangely ignores Scottish Arthurian pageants. Although there was an attempt to re-situate the Arthurian myth and use it as a means to highlight a united, Celtic Scotland that subverted stadialism, Scottish cultural nationalists were choosing a myth that other nations of Britain also had a claim to and thus they were situating their project within cultural unionism. This is exemplified in the poem 'The Arthurian Legends' in the programme for the *Glasgow University Pageant* which includes the line 'Oer Brittain Arthur Kynge did rayne' (l. 5).<sup>109</sup> Arthur could not only support a Scottish myth of descent but also a wider British myth. The Arthurian myth perfectly fitted the needs of the *fin-de-siècle* Scottish Movement: seeking to define Scotland in opposition to Saxon ethnicity (as did Ireland) while using a mythic vocabulary that was still consistent with its partner in Empire. Indeed, Geddes was the honorary secretary of the *Pageant of London 1913*,<sup>110</sup> otherwise known as 'The Festival of Empire',<sup>111</sup> which concluded with 'The Pageant of the Gain of Empire'. The Scottish movement lay somewhere between England and Ireland: using both of their languages (as well as its own) to meet its ends.

## 5.5 Education

In providing historical and mythological narratives to the masses, pageants were closely associated with education, and they provided an alternative means to communicate ideas. Geddes's masques and pageants had particularly important ties to education: he believed pageants could be used to celebrate what he believed were

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<sup>108</sup> Joost Augusteyn, *Patrick Pearse: The making of a revolutionary* (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 170.

<sup>109</sup> Programme of the Pageant held at the University of Glasgow, 10 October 1908 [Special Collections, Glasgow University Library: Sp Coll Mu21-d.56].

<sup>110</sup> Papers relating to Masques [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/112].

<sup>111</sup> Public spectacles were often used to simultaneously celebrate the Empire. The most emblematic contemporary example of this was Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, which was also a spectacle of Empire.

Scotland's unique educational traditions. This was quite different to how Patrick Pearse used Celtic pageants to inspire a militant national feeling amongst children.

The impetus to educate through pageants is evident in Ireland in this period, particularly in Patrick Pearse's pageants at St Enda's school. These pageants, when compared to Scotland's, reveal how education and nationalism intersected differently in the two nations. At Patrick Pearse's St Enda's school for boys, several pageants were performed between 1909 and 1915 – which were mainly arranged and organised by Pearse's brother, William.<sup>112</sup> These pageants were often used as a means to educate the boys towards militant nationalist ends, as is particularly evident in *The Boy Deeds of Cúchulainn*. Here, the Celtic hero Cúchulainn was chosen as a role model to ignite a nationalist drive in the children who performed. Pearse stated: 'the noble personality of a Cúchulainn forms a true type of Gaelic nationality, full as it is of a youthful life and vigour and hope'<sup>113</sup> and that the school was 'anxious to send [its] boys home with the knightly image of Cúchulainn in their hearts and his knightly words ringing in their ears'.<sup>114</sup> The purpose of this was to cultivate a militant masculinity in the boys, a 'nationalist masculinity'.<sup>115</sup> This reached its peak in the school's 1911 Passion Play at the Abbey Theatre which was, as Trotter notes, 'a violent metaphor: a call for the Irish nationalist to accept his/her own cross and be prepared to die for Ireland'.<sup>116</sup> It was believed that the union was emasculating Ireland<sup>117</sup> and one way of counteracting this was to instil the image of the masculine Gael, as opposed to the fey Celt, and ideals of knighthood in the children from an early age. These pageants were using mythology, not simply to form a cultural identity but to educate the children in a way that could stimulate political change: pageants could help educate the boys towards militancy.

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<sup>112</sup> Mary Trotter, *Ireland's National Theatre: Political Performance and the Origins of the Irish Dramatic Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. 148.

<sup>113</sup> (cited in) Elaine Sisson, *Pearse's Patriots: St Enda's and the Cult of Boyhood* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2004), p. 79.

<sup>114</sup> (cited in) Trotter, p. 152.

<sup>115</sup> Sisson, p. 113.

<sup>116</sup> Trotter, p. 138.

<sup>117</sup> Sisson, p. 85.

The pageants at St Enda's School provide a useful comparison for considering the intersection between education and nationalism in Scotland. Although there were some representations of national military combat in work by those in Geddes's circle (such as John Duncan's submission to the Glasgow Corporation Bannockburn Centenary competition in 1914 – portraying Bruce slaying de Bohun – which tellingly lost out to John Hassall's portrayal of the pre-battle prayer) there was very little attempt to consciously encourage militancy in Scotland. Geddes's enthusiasm for 'the university militant' idea, outlined by Charles Ferguson in 1912, was concerned with improving the culture of education rather than political militancy.<sup>118</sup> However, there was an element of nationalism to the relationship between education and pageantry in Scotland. This becomes apparent in Geddes's writings, primarily in his book *Dramatisations of History* (1923) which was an accompaniment to the *Masque of Learning*, first performed in 1912, that presented the development of education across the planet.

Geddes was an advocate of the Scottish generalist education tradition, one examined in George Davie's book *The Democratic Intellect* (1961).<sup>119</sup> In contrast to what he saw as England's specialist education tradition, Geddes thought Scotland's education system was synthesist. He described the great Scottish thinkers as 'our many seekers for synthesis' while also stating that 'Oxford will retain its manifold advantages and charms; but our renewal of contacts with the continent generally [...] remains none the less the paramount desideratum of our Scottish Universities'.<sup>120</sup> He also stated that the Scottish education system resembled Celtic culture in its rootedness in 'synthesis'.<sup>121</sup> However, he not only respected these Scottish traditions but wanted to enhance them. He was particularly interested in creating a more active, participative form of learning and critiquing current trends: 'our docile memorising and

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<sup>118</sup> For more on Geddes's interest in 'the university militant' see John Scott and Ray Bromley, *Envisioning Sociology: Victor Branford, Patrick Geddes, and the Quest for Social Reconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), pp. 157-160.

<sup>119</sup> For more on Geddes's generalism, see Murdo Macdonald, 'Patrick Geddes's Generalism: from Edinburgh's Old Town to Paris's Universal Exhibition', in *Patrick Geddes: The French Connection*, ed. by Frances Fowle and Belinda Thomson (Oxford: White Cockade Publishing, 2004), pp. 83-94.

<sup>120</sup> *Dramatisations*, pp. 187, 120.

<sup>121</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'The Celtic Cross', p. 2 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 5/2/13].

general “good order” are far too much mere submission and stupor; symptoms of our decline, even of nearness to death’.<sup>122</sup> He also believed in bridging the divide between town and gown, as discussed in Chapter 3, to counter the ring-fencing of knowledge, and he critiqued the developing system of University management which privileged uniformity and ‘Futilitarianism’:<sup>123</sup> ‘in short, re-enter Guru and disciples, master and scholars: exeunt Chancellors, University Courts and Boards’.<sup>124</sup> In these quotes, like many of the Decadents’, Geddes turns against the utilitarians and brands them, not those they label Decadent, responsible for societal decline.



Figure 5.14: Sketch plan for final tableau, *The Masque of Ancient Learning*, 1912 (Archive Services and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/112)

Geddes believed that pageantry was an apt tool for helping to realise his civic nationalist education aims. As has been noted, he believed that masques were the Outlook Tower’s ‘most ambitious and comprehensive’ project to remedy conventional education. As in Pearse’s pageant, the schoolboy takes centre stage in *The Masque of*

<sup>122</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 116.

<sup>123</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 87.

<sup>124</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 88

*Learning*: in the Prologue the schoolboy's bag is analysed, and it is found full of books that are 'the very spirit of the commercial and financial age', with the 'stamp of bureaucracy' that 'depress, even repel, the student' and only a ball that represents 'Primeval man'.<sup>125</sup> However, for Geddes, the schoolboy is not to be taught a nationalist militancy but to experience a new educational tradition. By the end of the pageant (Figure 5.14), the boy is celebrated as a 'citizen-student': 'although University and City came in separately upon our stage, they go out together; and with our whilom schoolboy, now a citizen-student, as torch-bearer, leading the way'.<sup>126</sup> In many ways, this reconciliation of town and gown and increased social engagement is symbolic of what pageantry aimed to achieve. Such was the success of pageants: through them, it was possible 'to link up these resources more fully, to diffuse them more generally to direct them more definitely towards the life of citizenship on one hand, of, inward culture upon the other'.<sup>127</sup> Other pageants in Scotland celebrated such synthesis too: the front cover of the handbook for the *National Exhibition Pageant* shows Lugh 'hurling the sun against the Powers of darkness' (Figure 5.15). Lugh is often understood as the great Celtic generalist, 'the presiding deity of all human knowledge and of all artistic and medicinal skill',<sup>128</sup> and the pageant handbook even acknowledges this, describing him as 'inventor of all the arts'.<sup>129</sup> Pageantry was believed to encourage a more civic, participatory and generalist form of education.

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<sup>125</sup> *Dramatisations*, pp. 1-2, 190.

<sup>126</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 180.

<sup>127</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 101.

<sup>128</sup> T. W. Rolleston, *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1911). p. 112.

<sup>129</sup> *Scottish Children's League of Pity Pageant Handbook, 1908*, Pamphlet (1908), p. 6.



Figure 5.15: Front Cover of *Scottish Children's League of Pity Pageant Handbook*, 1908

Pageants also complemented Geddes's ideas on education as they were largely visual performances. Geddes argued that 'we do not clearly think, much less clearly idealise, until we visualise, and energise: that is, until we dramatise'.<sup>130</sup> The pageants he designed were almost entirely communicated through visuals: 'silent or almost wordless performance[s]'.<sup>131</sup> Geddes even believed that pageants could become successful motion pictures: 'just as the Picture House freshens the public mind by showing things far from our everyday street, so we might at any rate be pardoned even were we but rehearsing – so as to be worthy some day of appearing in a new film – one too which with all its faults might surely hold its own with many others on the market'.<sup>132</sup> This quote reveals how large an audience Geddes had in mind and how the pageants appealed to mass culture. Pageants played into the emerging interest in moving visual culture in the period and this was an education aid for Geddes: assisting the clarity of thinking and reaching a wider demographic.

Furthermore, Geddes believed that pageants could help change the way universities conducted their research. For example, he encouraged anthropologists and archaeologists to present their findings in the form of a masque, rather than in a

<sup>130</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. v.

<sup>131</sup> *Dramatisations*, p. 194.

<sup>132</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'Use of the Masque', p. 7 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 12/1/158].

journal, anticipating academia's current interest in civic engagement: 'why should research societies always hunt for subscriptions in one quarter, and then publish their learned work mainly in another, when they might so readily, as Masquers, widely popularise their science'.<sup>133</sup> Indeed, in Geddes's *Masque of Learning*, historical artefacts were used, as William J Hay – writing into *The Scotsman* – informs: one of the several examples that he gives is that a spear 'carried was borne in the Battle of Flodden'.<sup>134</sup> These masques were an example of historical research being performed and accessing a wide audience. The fact that the pageants also interacted with civic Scotland – most notably with the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which includes visual processions in its decorations (discussed above) and also hosted photography shoots for the *National Exhibition Pageant* – attests to the fact that pageantry could help support a type of education system that was more connected to civic society than other forms of education or cultural memory.

Thus, pageants could support what Geddes believed was a key feature of Scotland's education system – synthesis – and the new reforms he believed were necessary. In this respect, his masques fostered a civic nationalism – styling and celebrating a particular education tradition in Scotland, and encouraging it widely, rather than using them to nurture feelings towards militancy, as occurred in Patrick Pearse's pageants.

## 5.6 Conclusion

As has been discussed in the preceding four chapters, there was a clear uneasiness over narratives of improvement in Scotland in this period. There was also a growing concern over the burden of history internationally – discussed above with regards to Nietzsche. These two phenomena compromised a unified collective memory in Scotland. Pageants, with their stress on processions and providing panoramas of

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<sup>133</sup> *Dramatisations*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>134</sup> William J Hay, 'Masque of Learning', *The Scotsman*, 16 March 1912, p. 11.



history, were a form of cultural memory that became popular at the turn of the century as they helped appease these anxieties. While occultism helped to articulate the hidden, ancestral self and to suggest connection to it, pageants facilitated the dissemination of myths of origin and lines of continuation to mass audiences and helped build a selective cultural memory that could bolster a unified national identity. Unlike other forms of cultural memory in the nineteenth century, pageantry could articulate lines of descent and express a sense of where the nation, as a group, had come from. What distinguished national pageants in Scotland from some produced in Ireland was that, like many other aspects of the Scots Renaissance, they were not designed to completely dissociate Scotland from the British state, nor to foster a militant nationalism, but to disseminate particular myths and forms of civic nationalism that distinguished Scotland. These pageants were key vehicles for stimulating popular engagement with Scotland's myths of descent and its particular form of cultural nationalism.

## Conclusion

In his collection of autobiographical essays, *The Company I've Kept*, Hugh MacDiarmid devotes a section to Patrick Geddes. Here, he not only outlines his admiration for Geddes's work but his problematic legacy in Scotland:

Prophets are proverbially without honour in their own country, but even so the neglect or ignorance of Sir Patrick Geddes in Scotland goes to an uncommon degree and throws a very disconcerting light on our whole national condition, since he was one of the outstanding thinkers of his generation, not merely in Britain but in the world, and not only one of the greatest Scotsmen of the past century but in our entire history.<sup>1</sup>

MacDiarmid's respect is reflected in his keenness to seek the company of Geddes when he was alive, through correspondence and intending to visit him in Montpellier.<sup>2</sup> The poet's comments resemble Alasdair Gray's remark that Geddes is a 'rare fish ignored by the shoals'.<sup>3</sup> Geddes was not the only *fin-de-siècle* figure who earned MacDiarmid's respect. MacDiarmid cites Cunninghame Graham as one of his major sources of inspiration: indeed, his decision to 'make the Scottish cause, cultural and political, my life-work' dated from the moment he met Cunninghame Graham.<sup>4</sup> MacDiarmid also noted that Cunninghame Graham 'possesses to a higher degree than any Scot of his generation those vital qualities of the Scottish genius',<sup>5</sup> and that 'there is no finer figure in all the millenary pageant of Scotland's writers'.<sup>6</sup> Gunn's work also drew from William Sharp's and, as MacDiarmid told Gunn, it belonged to that longer renaissance from the 1890s onwards.<sup>7</sup>

Part of the purpose of this thesis has been to demonstrate that the *fin de siècle* should not be marginalised in narratives of Scottish cultural history and these quotations alone demonstrate why. Scotland was not 'effectively dead' before the

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Company I've Kept* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1966), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from CM Grieve to Patrick Geddes, 6 October 1930 [Archives and Special Collections, University of Strathclyde: T-GED 9/1717].

<sup>3</sup> Alasdair Gray, *Why Scots should rule Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1992), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *Albyn*, ed. by Alan Riach (Manchester: Cancanet, 1996), p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1926), pp. 49-57.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *Cunninghame Graham: A Centenary Study* (Glasgow: Caledonian Press, 1952), p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Julian Hanna, 'Manifestos at Dawn: Nation, City and Self in Patrick Geddes and William Sharp's *Evergreen*', *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, 8 (2011) <<http://www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk/issue8/hanna.htm>> [accessed 28 August 2014].

1920s, as Cairns Craig has recently claimed.<sup>8</sup> As has been shown throughout, clear lines of continuity exist between figures working in the 1890s and the national Revivalists of the 1920s, which Scottish literary historians need to come to terms with and appreciate with more nuance.

The thesis has demonstrated that challenging these established narratives can be best achieved by considering Scotland in the context of Decadence: the international *fin-de-siècle* concern with challenging narratives of improvement became connected to national discourse in Scotland – as such narratives were felt to be dividing Scottish identity – and supported the development of Scotland’s particular cultural nationalism. By grasping this, we can break with the idea that Scotland was somehow parochial or assimilated in this period and recognise that it was actively involved in the rise of Decadence and cultural nationalism across Europe. In this respect, the thesis also makes an important contribution to Decadence Studies, which too often frames Decadence as an anti-national and vaguely cosmopolitan phenomenon. Often, *fin-de-siècle* cultural nationalism and Decadence were interdependent.

Luckily, there are signs that interest in the culture of the Scots Renaissance and *fin-de-siècle* Scotland is growing. The forthcoming Patrick Geddes Centre for Learning and Conservation at Riddle’s Court, Edinburgh, along with the establishment of the third version of *The Evergreen* in 2014 – edited by Sean V. Bradley and Elizabeth Elliott – attest to the fact that Geddes’s milieu is inspiring contemporary Scottish culture. The 2014 conference ‘The Celtic Revival in Scotland’, The Carmichael Watson Project and The New Edinburgh Edition of Robert Louis Stevenson’s collected works also point to a re-awakening of discussion regarding this period. Time will tell if these projects contribute to a larger recovery of *fin-de-siècle* Scotland in literary critics’ narratives of Scottish culture.

Although the thesis has helped us understand how we can improve narratives of Scottish culture between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has also

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<sup>8</sup> Cairns Craig, ‘The Case for Culture’, *The Scottish Review of Books*, 10.3 (2014), 19-20 (p. 19).

indicated where further scholarship on the Scottish *fin de siècle* could be directed. One feature of Scottish culture that needs to be considered in terms of national identity construction in far more detail, and across a wider timespan, is religion. Chapters 3 and 4 revealed that various religious sects were at times felt to support and at times felt to hinder the creation of a unified Scottish national voice. Consideration of how religious sects played into or restricted Scottish national identity formation from the Enlightenment onwards is sorely needed to elucidate this. A similar issue exists with the Gaelic language: although there was a desire to revive Gaelic amongst certain Scottish cultural nationalists, it appears to have been less intimately bound up with the Scots Renaissance than Irish was for cultural nationalists in Ireland. A detailed comparison, building on Laura O'Connor's work, would benefit understandings of the uses of Irish, Gaelic and Scots and how they interacted with each culture's national movements. More specifically, there are several comparisons between the Scots Renaissance and the emergence of Zionism in the period which could be fruitfully explored, especially with longer temporal parameters than this study's. A consideration of how the issues of gender discussed in Chapter 3 interacted with the Suffrage Movement that was developing could also be beneficial. The importance of the figure of the child in Scottish culture is increasingly being recognised (by Alan Riach in particular)<sup>9</sup> and this could certainly be studied with a greater focus on the *fin de siècle* where so many of the writers and artists either imagined children as the audience of their cultural nationalist work or it was well-received by children.

Work could also examine the legacy of the movement in Scotland, besides its ties to the Scottish Renaissance. This movement's attempt to style the whole of Scotland as 'Celtic', to distance Scotland from England, may well have had an impact on the way the nation was framed in the twentieth century: for instance, John Maclean described the Scottish people as Celts in the 1920s when articulating his notion of

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<sup>9</sup> Alan Riach, *Representing Scotland in Literature, Popular Culture and Iconography: The Masks of the Modern Nation* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 88-120.

Celtic Communism.<sup>10</sup> The acceptance amongst some that the whole of Scotland was ethnically Celtic was far removed from the ethnic division of 1850s Scotland, as detailed in Chapter 1: to what extent did the Scots Renaissance impact this change?

In order to more fully engage with any aspect of *fin-de-siècle* Scotland and the *fin de siècle* more widely, the prevalence of mono-disciplinary methodologies must be overcome. Scottish Cultural Studies and Decadence Studies need to do more to appreciate the importance of holistic thinking around the 1890s and the degree of cross-pollination between disciplines. To continue unlocking these fertile subjects and narratives we must, as Lewis Mumford said of Geddes, practice 'synthesis in an age of specialism'.<sup>11</sup> After all, 'watertight compartments are useful only to a sinking ship'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John Maclean, *In the Rapids of Revolution: Essays, articles and letters 1902-23*, ed. by Nan Milton (London: Allison & Busby, 1978), pp. 217-218.

<sup>11</sup> (cited in) MacDiarmid, *The Company*, p. 79.

<sup>12</sup> MacDiarmid, *The Company*, p. 83.

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